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Considerations for Introducing, Facilitating, and Expanding Mindfulness Training in the Workplace

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Abstract

This creative thesis is designed to further the understanding of the considerations for offering mindfulness training in the workplace and to offer mindfulness practitioners a guide for introducing and facilitating mindfulness training into their workplaces. This thesis consists of two primary components: 1) a rationale paper and 2) a creative component. The rationale paper includes a literature review that focuses on the benefits and risks of offering mindfulness training in the workplace; these form the business case for bringing mindfulness to the workforce and identify the gaps in the research that prompted the questions underlying this thesis. These gaps were explored in a mindfulness pilot, the results of which were used to develop recommendations for offering mindfulness training in the workplace. These recommendations are then offered in the creative component of this thesis. The creative component contains the essential elements needed for a mindfulness practitioner to introduce and facilitate mindfulness at their place of work. This includes a sample business case, needs assessment, change/communications plan, facilitator's guide, and model curriculum, which can be modified and adapted by mindfulness practitioners to tailor the training based on the need. Combined, the considerations developed in the rationale paper and the creative component will allow mindfulness practitioners to offer mindfulness training in the workplace, thus increasing expansion into the mainstream workforce.

Keywords: mindfulness, meditation, workplace, training, curriculum, well-being

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Considerations for Introducing, Facilitating, and Expanding Mindfulness Training in the Workplace

This thesis is comprised of a rationale paper which includes a literature review and new information obtained from the results of a mindfulness training pilot. The rationale paper focuses on the considerations for offering mindfulness in the workplace, the benefits and risks for employees and employers, and identifies the gaps in the research that prompted the questions underlying this thesis. These gaps were further explored in the mindfulness training pilot. The pilot was used to develop the creative component of this thesis which is designed for mindfulness practitioners' usage. The creative elements offer practitioners guidelines for introducing mindfulness training in their workplace and includes a model for suggested lesson planning and curriculum. Combined, the rationale paper and creative component are offered to expand mindfulness into the mainstream workplace.

Literature Review

There is a plethora of literature espousing the benefits of mindfulness in the workplace. This review examined research-based literature from 2015–2019 exploring what is known about the outcomes of offering mindfulness in the workplace and what the considerations are for offering this type of training. The review focused predominately on literature reviews, meta-analysis, recently conducted randomized control trials (RCT), or quasi-RCTs. This review excluded lower-quality research which was found to be questionable.

Employee and Employer Outcomes

A long list of potential outcomes from mindfulness training in the workplace were identified. For example, in one systematic review, 35 mental/psychological outcomes were examined, some overlapping, and some as subsets of larger categories (Janssen et al., 2018).

Rather than address all the potential outcomes from providing mindfulness in the workplace, this review focused on the highest percentage primary reasons for providing the training found in the research: stress reduction (80.6%), mindfulness (58.2%), and improvements in well-being (34.3%), compassion (26.9%), and self-regulation (16.4%) (Eby et al., 2019). The findings in the reviewed literature support the conclusions that mindfulness training increases mindfulness and improves responses to stress, well-being, compassion, and self-regulation. Although there is some evidence that shows positive effects of mindfulness on role/work performance, the results are considered inconclusive, and the effects of mindfulness on performance need more research. Additionally, a few negative outcomes were discovered that may have potentially negative consequences for offering mindfulness training in the workplace. The following sections explore these benefits and risks in more detail.

Benefits: Mindfulness, Stress, Well-being, Compassion and Self-Regulation.

Bartlett et al. (2019) completed a review and meta-analysis of workplace mindfulness training examining RCTs and found consistent positive effects for increasing mindfulness using four different measures. It is important to note that the researchers observed differences in mindfulness outcomes depending on the measurement instrument used. Concerns about differing definitions and measurements were a consistent theme in the research studies and are explored further in the section on research gaps.

There is strong empirical evidence that mindfulness can improve an employee's stress response, which has been shown to improve physical and mental health. A meta-analysis of 35 RCTs studying mindfulness-based interventions designed to improve occupational well-being found a strong outcome for improvements in stress (Lomas et al., 2018). Likewise, a systematic review of 23 RCTs or quasi-RCTs found that eight out of nine studies measuring perceived stress

found a significant reduction in stress levels (Janssen et al., 2019). Finally, Bartlett et al. (2019) completed a review and meta-analysis of workplace mindfulness training examining RCTs and concluded that a moderate perceived stress reduction was observed, but it was a weak positive trend that was not significant. The researchers suggest that the weak findings may have been caused by inconsistencies in measurement. A literature review of more recent RCT studies conducted after the above-mentioned reviews and meta-analysis found additional evidence that mindfulness training in the workplace can reduce stress (Allexandre et al., 2016; Bartlett et al, 2018; Bostock et al., 2019).

There is also evidence that mindfulness increases well-being, although there are concerns with an inconsistent definition and measure for *well-being*. A meta-analysis of 35 RCTs studying mindfulness-based interventions designed to improve occupational well-being found moderate effects on well-being when defined as *life satisfaction, resilience,* and *positive affec*t (Lomas et al., 2018). Lomas found increases in well-being measured by *life satisfaction* (as cited in Diener et al., 1978), and *Positive and Negative Affect Scale* and *Resilience* (as cited in Windel, 2011). However, in a systematic review of eight RCT and quasi-RCT trials, Janssen et al. (2018) found that four studies reported significant positive changes in *life satisfaction* or general *well-being*, whereas the remaining four reported no significant improvements in *life satisfaction*. The Janssen study exemplifies the inconsistency in results because of differing measure/definitions. In this study at least six different scales were used to measure well-being and may have affected the results. More recently, in an RCT experiment investigating mindfulness delivered via a smartphone app; researchers found significant improvement in well-being for the mindfulness intervention group compared to that of the control group (Bostock et al., 2019). Although there appears to be ample evidence supporting mindfulness training and its positive effects on well-

being, a consistent definition and measure of well-being would improve the strength of these findings.

There is strong evidence that mindfulness training increases compassion. A meta-analysis conducted on compassion-based interventions that included 23 RCTs found significant short-term moderate effect sizes for compassion (Kirby et al., 2015). In an integrative review of mindfulness at work, Good et al. (2018) cited evidence that mindfulness increases compassion (as cited in Condon et al., 2013; Lim et al., 2015) and self-compassion (as cited in Roeser et al., 2013). A more recent systematic review and meta-analysis on the effects of meditation (a type of mindfulness training) on prosocial behaviors in 16 RCTs of healthy adults, found that meditation interventions had a positive effect on compassion (Kreplin et al., 2018). The researchers qualified their findings, highlighting that the overall methodological quality of 61% of the studies was graded as weak. The quality of mindfulness studies is another identified research gap. Likewise, a meta-analysis of 35 RCTs studied mindfulness-based interventions designed to improve occupational well-being found moderate effects for increases in compassion, although statistically significant heterogeneity was not found (Lomas et al., 2018). Finally, in a systematic review of four RCT and quasi-RCTs studies, Janssen et al. (2018) found a significant increase in self-compassion in the group receiving mindfulness training compared to the group that did not. Although there are some concerns with research quality, there are consistent findings that mindfulness training has been shown to increase compassion.

In an integrative review conducted by Good et al. (2016), mindfulness was found to influence the lifecycle of emotions, shortening the time from peak arousal to return to baseline (as cited in Keng et al., 2013; Brown et al., 2012; Goldin & Gross, 2010). This shortened recovery time from peak arousal to a baseline of an emotional stability improves the capacity to

more skillfully manage highly emotionally charged situations. Good et al. also found that mindfulness decreases emotional reactivity (as cited in Brown et al., 2013; Desbordes et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2011). This reduction of emotional reactivity lessens the emotional triggering and increases emotional stability. The evidence found in this literature review supports the findings that mindfulness training in the workplace can increase self-regulation; however, the research is predominantly focused on emotional regulation as a component of self-regulation.

In contrast, the effects of mindfulness training in the workplace on work performance is less conclusive. Several earlier literature reviews found that mindfulness positively affects job/task performance (Glomb et al., 2011; Good et al., 2016 as cited in Shonin et al., 2014 and Grepmair et al., 2017; Lomas et al., 2017). However, meta-analyses offer a different view. A meta-analysis of 35 RCTs studying mindfulness-based interventions designed to improve occupational well-being found only small to moderate effects on job performance (Lomas et al., 2018). In 2019, Bartlett et al. completed a review and meta-analysis of workplace mindfulness training RCTs and stated that they could not draw conclusions about work performance because of insufficient data. Bartlett et al. concluded from their meta-analysis that there is a lack of RCT evidence to conclude that mindfulness training improves work performance, including "improvements in organizational citizenship, leadership, deviance, safety, or creativity" (p.123). Bartlett et al. add that the claims that mindfulness has a positive effect on role/work performance are "ahead of the evidence" (p.122). It is important to note that the Bartlett et al. analysis focused only on RCTs and did not include the aforementioned research studies in their analysis. This inconsistency in findings may be due to the quality of the research design. Despite the findings from several research studies that mindfulness training in the workplace improves work performance, there is a lack of agreement in the literature. Outside of the scientific literature,

businesses are self-reporting positive outcomes from mindfulness training in the workplace. It should be noted that it is in the best interest of a business to report positive outcomes (to improve market ratings and value), so these reported outcomes should be considered with some degree of caution. For example, General Mills reported that 83% of participants in a mindfulness study have optimized their productivity (Marturano, 2014). According to the scientific literature reviews and reports from businesses that have conducted mindfulness training, the training can be beneficial to work performance. However, several meta-analyses find little or inconclusive evidence to support this. Therefore, there is some evidence showing positive effects of mindfulness on role/work performance, but these results are inconclusive.

Potential Risks for Offering Mindfulness Training in the Workplace.

It would not be ethical to exclude the potential negative outcomes or consequences of offering mindfulness training in the workplace that were discovered during this literature review. For example, there are several reports indicating that it is not uncommon for participants in mindfulness training to experience unpleasant reactions – such as agitation, discomfort, or confusion before, during, or after the training, especially for those with a trauma history. Mindfulness and other contemplative practices can act like a magnifying glass, amplifying what is in the mind, and can increase the intensity of what is experienced.

Another concern, according to Hülsheger (2015), is that once participants in mindfulness training gain more awareness, they may see the sources of happiness and unhappiness more clearly and may be more willing to make life-changing decisions, such as leaving a partner or changing jobs. Employees may seek more work-life balance, reducing the number of hours worked or setting boundaries with work during non-working hours. On the other hand, Hülsheger argues that in the long-term employers may benefit from retaining employees who

find the right fit between their work and life satisfaction. It is important to note that this is anecdotal and theoretical, not research-based, and that no empirical evidence was found to support this concern. This does not make the concern invalid, just unsubstantiated.

Another potential negative consequence is related to the mindfulness concept of *non-striving*, which may contradict an employer's need for employees to strive to achieve goals. Employees may stop striving, as mindfulness training encourages non-striving, and therefore may not strive for promotions or other performance goals (Brown et al., 2009). Employees learning mindfulness may be less interested in extrinsic goals and more focused on intrinsic goals. This has been partially validated by an fMRI study showing that mindfulness trainees were less impacted by monetary rewards (Kirk et al., 2015). This may be problematic in the workplace since most performance goals are linked to extrinsic compensation and benefits rewards. Similarly, Hafenbrack and Vohs (2018) found that the state of mindfulness impaired motivation to complete cognitive and performance tasks. Therefore, providing mindfulness training in the workplace may contradict the standard employer processes for motivating employees.

The final concerns discovered during the literature review are the organizational and legal risks when providing mindfulness training. Employers may be concerned about privacy and legality and thus not allow the measurement or collection of certain data about or from employees. These data can be extremely sensitive. Therefore, these considerations must be taken into account before offering mindfulness in the workplace. These risks can be minimized by discussing the concerns openly with the employees and employers and seeking legal guidance and approval for how to protect employee data and confidentiality. Finally, waiver and consent forms are recommended. Examples can be found in Appendix A that can be used as models.

The risks and benefits of mindfulness make it a complicated issue. A lot has been written from various perspectives, for, and against offering mindfulness training in the workplace. Some argue that the potential benefits for participants, may not be perceived as beneficial by some employers. Depending on the culture of an organization, employee compliance may be more valued than employee awareness, realization, or self-actualization. Conversely, some argue that compromising the value of mindfulness for employees to increase the benefit for employers is unethical. Therefore, the intention for offering mindfulness training in the workplace and the implications from the perspectives of employee and employer need to be considered when making the business case.

Gaps in the Research and Research Questions

A number of gaps were discovered during the literature review that need further exploration when one considers offering mindfulness training in the workplace. These gaps informed the design of the mindfulness training pilot. The results and recommendations from the pilot offer some suggestions for working with these gaps to further future research. There were concerns with the quality of research design in most of the mindfulness at work studies, which is understandable given the time and resource constraints faced by many researchers. These same constraints influenced the mindfulness pilot design in this paper.

Another concern with the research is the generalizing of research findings from a specific population to a different population. Mindfulness outcomes may be different in non-clinical populations than in clinical populations, where a significant amount of research is conducted. Likewise, mindfulness outcomes may be different if mindfulness training is taught in the workplace instead of other settings. Finally, a lot of the research findings regarding mindfulness are specific to those who work in the *caring* professions (such as nursing, teaching, social work,

etc.), and these findings may not be suitable to generalize to those working in the non-caring professions. In the mindfulness pilot, the population of participants was non-clinical and working in the information technology (IT) industry. Most of the participants were software engineers.

Finally, the most significant concern facing researchers is the challenges with inconsistent definitions, concepts and measurement instruments used in the research. These differing measures make it difficult to compare results and understand inconsistencies. When designing mindfulness training in the workplace and measuring outcomes, it is important to choose measurement instruments that align with the type and definition of the content of mindfulness training being offered (to raise awareness, increase attention, etc.). Likewise, the instrument needs to fit the culture and the participants (for example, type of workforce and clinical or non-clinical population). The final consideration is the what and how to deliver the mindfulness training. A needs assessment can help determine what and how to offer mindfulness training in the workplace. An example of a needs assessment is provided in Appendix B.

Thesis Questions

When considering offering mindfulness training in the workplace, what needs to be considered can be broken into three categories. The first is the intention of purpose for offering training. From a business perspective, this would be the business case. The business case would allow the mindfulness practitioner to introduce mindfulness, “make the case” to the employer, and gain support from the employer for the program by developing a change management and communications plan. Second, the substance of what would be offered needs to be taken into consideration. This includes building curriculum that meets the needs of the organization and fits within the culture of the organization. Third, how the mindfulness training is to be offered, the dosage or amount of training, and the delivery means needs to be taken into consideration. A

needs assessment can be conducted to understand what and how to conduct mindfulness training. These primary considerations were explored in the research and a mindfulness pilot conducted with a global IT business' local office. What was discovered has been developed into the creative component of this thesis to serve as a model for a mindfulness practitioner to use to provide mindfulness training in the workplace.

Mindfulness Pilot

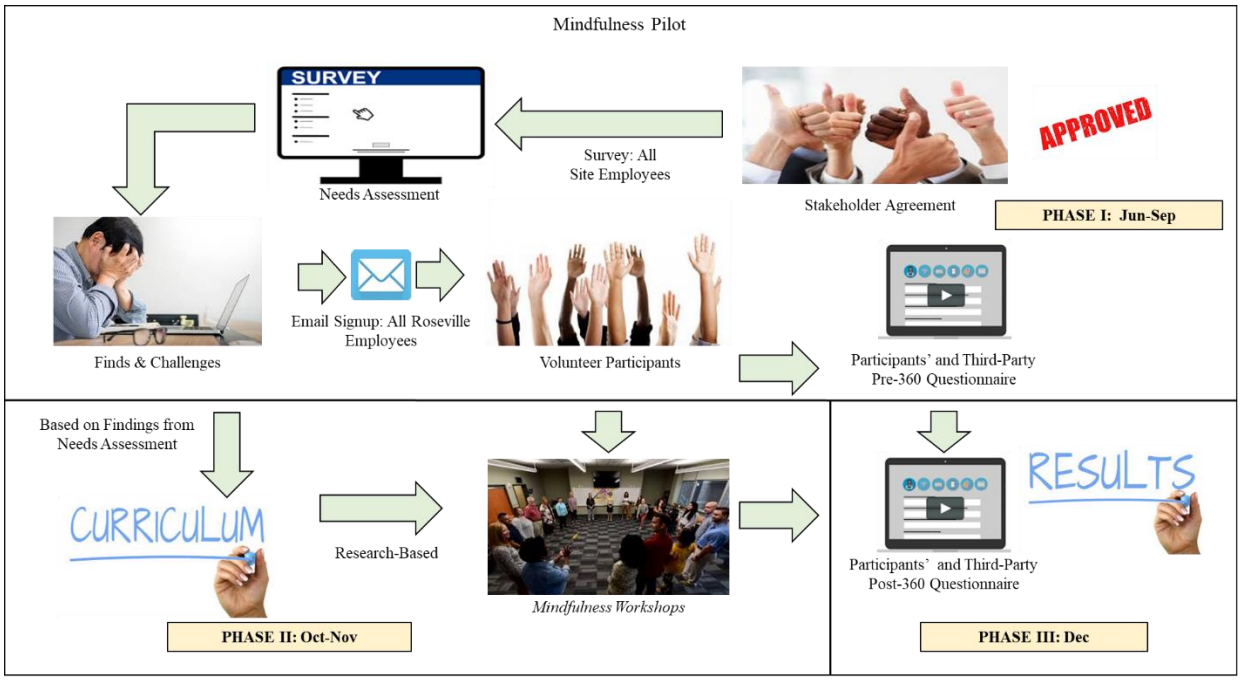
The literature reviewed offered evidence on outcomes, but there were gaps and inconclusive recommendations for how best to offer mindfulness training in the workplace. Given these gaps, a mindfulness pilot was conducted with a local business to test offering mindfulness training in the workplace and to incorporate the learnings from the pilot into the recommendations for developing a mindfulness training offering.

Design and Data Collection

A large global IT company with a local office in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area was approached with an offering to provide a free mindfulness training program for its employees in the form of a pilot. The business case was developed and presented to the company executives, who approved the mindfulness pilot. A flow for the pilot is depicted in Figure 1, starting in the upper right corner of the figure with approval. The pilot was undertaken in three phases. The first phase was the longest because it included a needs assessment and pilot planning to include the development and execution of a change management and communications plan which were essential for the success of the pilot. The second phase included the development and delivery of the workshops. The third phase included the analysis and results of the pilot.

Figure 1

Mindfulness Pilot Flow



The figure above shows the flow of the mindfulness pilot. The steps below are the primary activities comprising the design of the pilot:

1. Identify and recruit a large global IT company with a local office that would allow free mindfulness training to be offered to employees in the form of a pilot.
2. Develop the business case, articulate the costs/benefits, create, and execute a change/communications plan to gain stakeholder agreement and support.
3. Conduct a needs assessment, lesson plans, and develop curriculum based on needs.
4. Offer and conduct overview sessions to introduce mindfulness and the pilot as part of the change management/communications plan.
5. Recruit participants for the mindfulness training to volunteer via email signup.

6. Conduct surveys gathering data from pre- and post- questionnaires measuring participants' stress, mindfulness, well-being, and affect to test for changes in outcomes before/after from the mindfulness training.
7. Conduct surveys gathering data from third-party questionnaires measuring participants' stress, mindfulness, well-being, and affect to be used as a comparison to self-reporting to test for the changes in outcomes before/after the participants attended the mindfulness training.
8. Test curriculum and content using different exercises and meditation practices with varied delivery based on the needs of the employer and participants. Gather feedback from website metrics on usage as well as self-reporting feedback questionnaires. This will provide insight into what resonates and potentially what influences the outcomes.
9. Share the results with the company, and work with the company, if desired, to develop a grassroots program to continue the mindfulness momentum with the company.

Measurement Instruments.

The following section explores the considerations for selecting the measurement instruments. Four confidential questionnaires were used in the pilot, 1) an anonymous needs assessment was offered to all the employees at the company location in the office in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro, 2) a second survey was offered to all employees, asking for volunteers to sign up for the mindfulness training, 3) participants completed a self-reporting questionnaire to measure changes to outcomes before and after the mindfulness training, and 4) a third-party questionnaire was sent to close associates of the participants who were selected by the participants. The third-party questionnaires were completed before and after the participants completed the mindfulness training. The questionnaires were built in SurveyMonkey and sent via

email with a link to the survey. Each questionnaire was open for two weeks. Reminder emails were sent after one week and then again 2-3 days before the questionnaires closed.

Most of the questions used in the questionnaires were drawn from validated source surveys to minimize potential bias in the question design. Questions about how and when to offer the mindfulness training were developed organically and independently reviewed to minimize bias in the question. Finally, the questions were offered in random order to reduce bias.

The needs assessment questionnaire is provided in Appendix B. The purpose of the needs assessment was two-fold. First, it was designed to gather an understanding of the overall level of employee stress, mindfulness, resilience, and employee engagement. The results were used to establish a plan for a needs-based curriculum. Second, the survey was designed to assess employee receptiveness toward mindfulness training and get some indication as to how much time employees would be willing to commit to mindfulness training, including homework practice. Questions from the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) (Fimian, 1988) were used to measure employee stress levels and factors contributing to employee stress. The TSI was chosen to measure stress because it included questions to determine the factors that contribute to employee stress, whereas the other more widely used stress scales did not. Questions from the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ, Gill, & Hodgkinson, 2007) were used to measure mindfulness, the FFMQ was chosen because it is a widely used validated measure and focuses on the mindfulness characteristics of awareness and attention. Questions from the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale Modified (Dong et al., 2013) were used to measure resilience because it is widely used validated measure. Finally, questions from Gartner (Wiles, 2018), a respected industry research firm, were used to measure employee engagement. Some additions and slight modifications were made to adjust the language for culture.

The participant signup questionnaire was used primarily to refine the understanding on what and how to design the mindfulness workshops expanding on what was already learned from the needs assessment. Participants were asked about the amount of time they were willing to commit for the mindfulness training to include the workshop and homework commitments, to identify the specific days and times that would work best with their schedules, and to rate the topics of interest which were used to develop the lesson plans for the mindfulness workshops. A copy of the participant signup survey is contained in Appendix C.

All of the questions used for assessing the participants' pre- and post- self-reporting and third-party questionnaires were drawn from validated questionnaires and sources. A copy of the pre- and post- participant questionnaire is contained in Appendix D, and a copy of the third-party questionnaire is contained in Appendix E. The Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale (PHLMS) was used to measure mindfulness because it is used in the general population (versus the clinical population), and it uses everyday words that are not specific to mindfulness, unlike the FFMQ. Additionally, the PHLMS measures the qualities of mindfulness that most closely aligned with the areas of focus for the mindfulness workshops, namely awareness without judgment. The PHLMS measures two main factors: 1) the attitude of acceptance and 2) awareness (Cardaciotto et al., 2008). The FFMQ was considered unsuitable as a pre- and post- measure for this pilot because the needs assessment showed that the participants had very little mindfulness and meditation experience. Van Dam et al. (2009) found a potential problem regarding FFMQ "construct validity when comparing meditators to non-meditators and when assessing mindfulness as a pre-post measure with meditation practice" (p. 516)". Questions about stress were drawn from the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) because it is one of the most widely used measures for assessing stress and is written in lay persons' terms. The PSS measures the degree

to which a participant perceives their life as uncontrollable, unpredictable, and overwhelming (Cohen et al., 1983). Questions from the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale Modified (Dong et al., 2013) were used to measure resilience because it is a widely used validated measure. Questions about affect were drawn from the Positive and Negative Affect Scales (PANAS) because a non-clinical scale for measuring self-regulation or emotional regulation was not discovered, and the PANAS is a widely used validated measure of emotional affect (Watson et al.,1988).

The questions used in the third-party questionnaire were modeled on the questions used in the self-reported participant questionnaire to allow for comparison between the two instruments. The challenge with using this methodology was that some of the questions on the participants' self-assessment questionnaires were reflexive and could not easily be answered by a third party as observable behaviors. Therefore, some of the questions in the third-party questionnaire had to be modified. For example, the question asked of the participant on the participant questionnaire was, "In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?". The modified question asked the third-party was, "In the last month, how often has *'insert name of participant*' felt that things were going their way?" This is a difficult question to answer unless the third party is very close to the workshop participant. The modified reflexive self-assessment questions that the third parties were asked to answer were difficult to answer questions because the questions were not asking about observable behaviors. This may have increased the risk of introducing bias based on the third-party's perception of the workshop participant.

Data Analysis and Results Discussion

Primary data was collected from 1) participants who attended the mindfulness training and 2) third parties closely associated with participants. Additionally, statistics were collected from a website where the curriculum and meditation practices were posted to determine actual usage. Finally, feedback from the participant surveys was also gathered. The following section offers the analysis and results of these collected data.

Needs Assessment Analysis and Results.

The following are the highlights and results of the needs assessment and were used to structure the mindfulness training workshops:

- 101 employees out of 357 employees in the company office responded, a 26% response rate, with a 95% confidence level and 8% margin of error.
- Most employees had had no experience with mindfulness and characterized their stress-level as moderate.
- The preferred amount of training or dosage was six workshops, each lasting 60 minutes.
- Employees were willing to commit 20–45 minutes daily for homework practice.

Based on the results of the needs assessment, the training was proposed as a series of six 60-minute workshops and varying lengths of homework practice, each lasting from 20–45 minutes. The proposed training plan and curriculum started with an introduction to mindfulness, followed by training to develop basic mindfulness skills. The training began with the easier skills first (mindfulness of the body) and worked up to the more difficult skills (mindfulness of thoughts and emotions). The last two workshops focused on the application of mindfulness skills, changing the relationship with stress and cultivating self-compassion. Each workshop consisted of an opening 3-minute breathing space meditation, practice discussion, didactic and/or

science behind the mindfulness talk, guided mindfulness meditation, mindfulness practice (communications exercise, mindful movement), group discussion, homework discussion, and a closing 3-minute breathing space meditation.

Participation Analysis and Results.

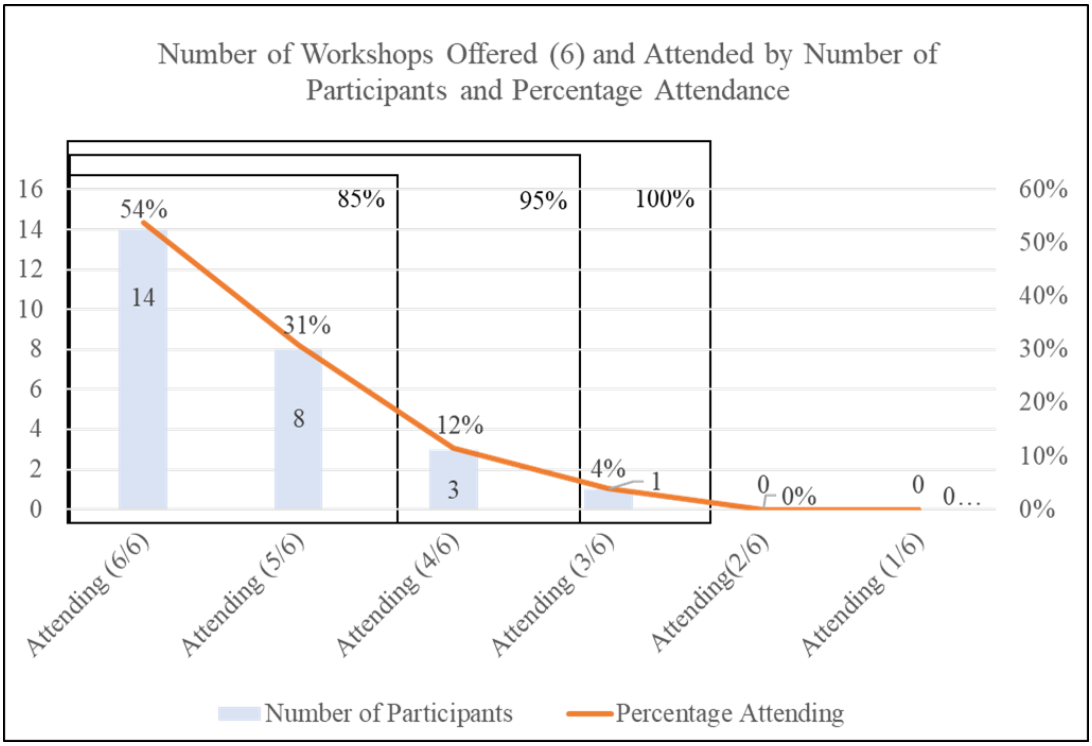
Twenty-six participants signed up for the workshops. Two withdrew, which is an 8% attrition rate. This is a relatively low attrition rate because the attrition rate for Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is around 25% (Kabat-Zinn & Chapman-Waldrop, 1988). Each workshop was offered twice and with one additional make-up workshop for each topic offered, so each employee had the opportunity to attend one of three sessions. Despite each workshop being offered three times, participants still missed some due to scheduling conflicts. Fifty-four percent of participants (14) attended all six workshops, 85% of participants (22) attended at least five workshops, 95% of participants (25) attended at least four workshops, and 100% (26) participants attended at least three workshops. Figure 2 shows the number of workshops offered and the number and percentage of participants who attended them.

Intention Outcomes Analysis and Results.

There are many reasons for why people are interested in learning about mindfulness or for what their intention is for participating in mindfulness training. At the beginning of the mindfulness workshop series, each participant was invited to reflect on the primary reason they were participating in the workshops and to journal about that reason or intention. Throughout the workshops, intention was discussed, and participants were asked to reflect and/or journal about their intention daily. No single measurement instrument was discovered in the literature review to measure the variety of reasons or intentions as a potential outcome measure for individual participants. In order to overcome the lack of an instrument to measure each intention, a question

Figure 2

Workshop Participation



was developed and added to the post-training participant questionnaire, asking each participant to assess the how the workshops had influenced their intention or reason for participating. Each participant responded using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from a strong negative effect to a strong positive effect. All the participants (100%) found that the mindfulness workshops had had a positive effect on their intention. Figure 3 shows the results the mindfulness workshops had on the reasons for participating or intentions of the participants.

Pre/Post Test Analysis and Results.

Basic statistics were used to analyze the self-reporting and third-party questionnaires to determine changes from pre- (before the mindfulness training) and post- (following the mindfulness training). The differences were the changes to mindfulness (measured by awareness

and acceptance), stress, well-being (measured by resilience and life satisfaction), and affect (positive and negative). Table 1 shows the statistically significant results, and Table 2 shows the aggregate correlation strength, Pearson's Correlation coefficient, and statistical significance for the self-reported measures from mindfulness pilot participants.

Figure 3

Intention Outcomes Results

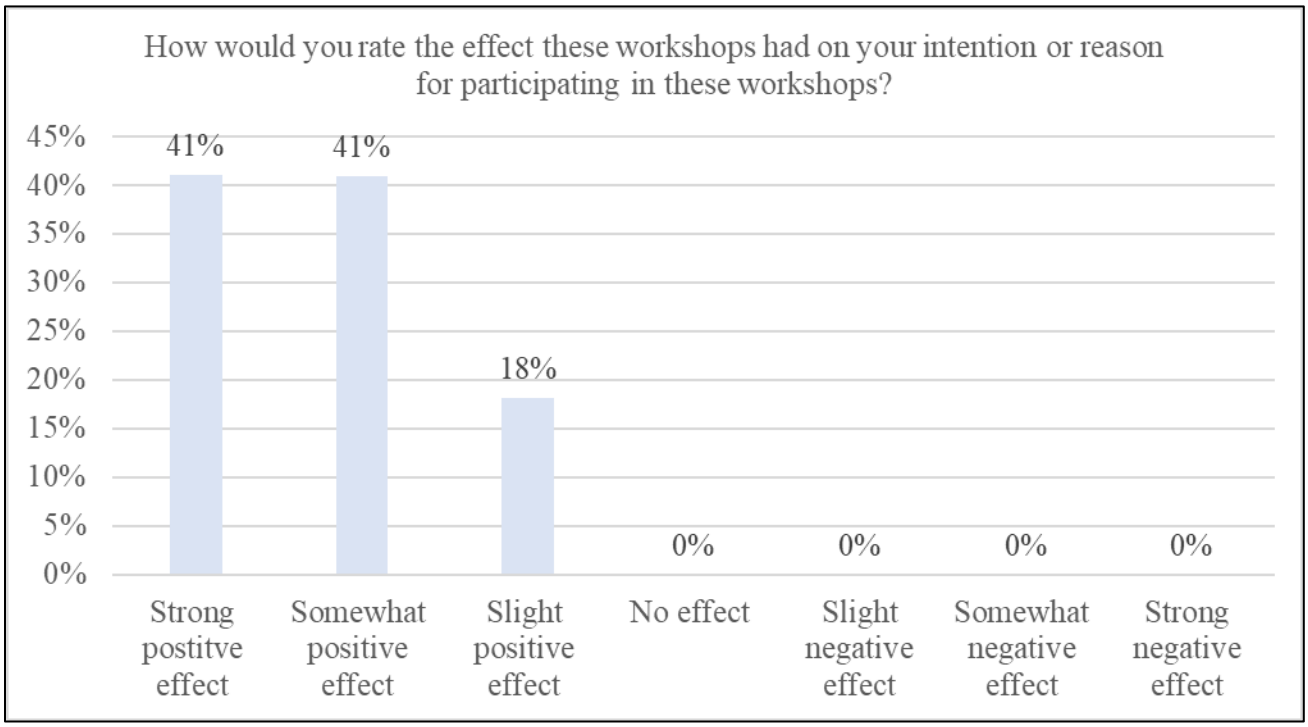


Table 1

Participant Self-Reported Results

% Change	Self-Reported Participant Measure	Correlation Strength
-12%	Stress	Moderately Strong Negative
11%	Acceptance	Moderate Positive
9%	Life Satisfaction	Strong Positive
6%	Resilience	Very Strong Positive

Table 2

Self-Reported Pre- and Post- Test Results

Self-Reported Participant Measure	Correlation Strength	Correlation Pearson	Statistical Significance P(T<=t) One-Tail
Resilience	Very Strong Positive	0.9143	0.0034
Life Satisfaction	Strong Positive	0.7526	0.0428
Stress	Moderately Strong Negative	-0.6842	0.0027
Acceptance	Moderate Positive	0.5010	0.0088
Awareness	Moderate Positive	0.4731	0.0628
Positive Affect	Weak Moderate Positive	0.3924	0.0044
Negative Affect	Weak Negative	-0.1034	0.0000

The results from the participants' self-reported measures showed significant decreases in stress and increases in acceptance, life satisfaction, and resilience (a measure for life satisfaction). The results were not significant for awareness and affect. It is interesting to note that the focus of the mindfulness workshops was to increase mindfulness as defined by increased focused attention or awareness without judgment or acceptance, and the results show a statistically significant increase in awareness but not acceptance. These results may have been affected by the curriculum design, which emphasized awareness more heavily than acceptance because there were specific workshops for awareness of the body, thoughts, and emotions. Although the *acceptance* element of mindfulness was included in each workshop, it was not the primary theme of three workshops, as was awareness. Likewise, it is noteworthy to add that more

than half the participants mentioned that they had struggled with the acceptance-without-judgment element of the mindfulness training.

Not enough third-party questionnaires were completed to include the results and to offer a comparison between the participants' self-reporting and third-party assessments. Each participant needed four or more completed third-party assessment responses to have the third-party assessment included in the results. It is a best practice to require at least four third-party assessments responses to protect the anonymity of the third-party respondents. The results of the third-party assessments are insignificant because only five participants received four or more completed third-party assessments.

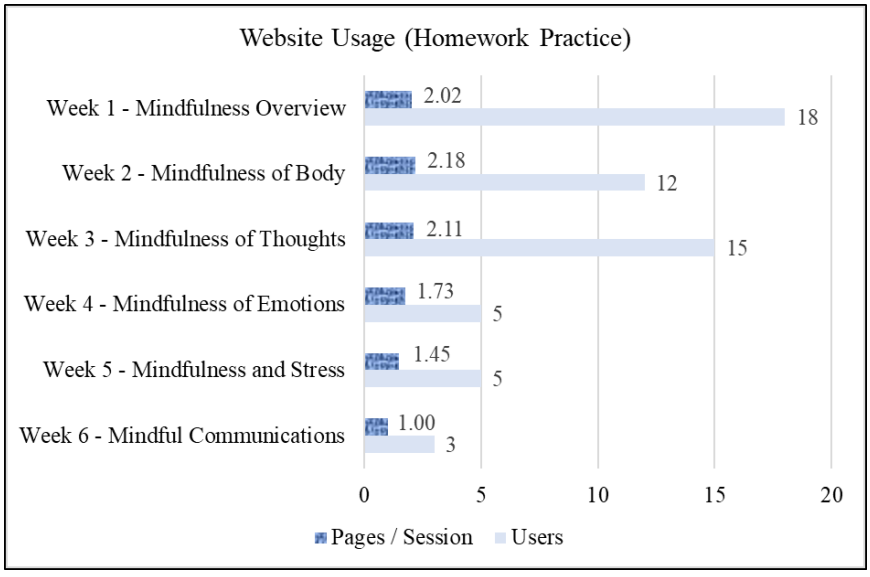
Preferences and Website Usage Analysis and Results.

Feedback questionnaires and website usage statistics were used to determine what elements of the mindfulness training curriculum, resonated most with the mindfulness workshop participants. Based on the responses from those who completed the feedback questionnaires sent out following each workshop, most participants preferred to meditate 3-4 days/week for 11-20 minutes on average each time. The most meaningful element of the curriculum was the guided mindfulness meditation practice. The second and third most meaningful elements were the mindful communications exercise, which was done in dyads, and the group discussions, respectively. It is interesting to note that interactive discussions in dyads and as a group were more meaningful than the didactic teachings and the science behind mindfulness. This implies that mindfulness training that includes interactive dyad/group discussions are more meaningful than those that do not include these interactions. This has implications when considering developing virtual training.

A password-protected website was developed for the mindfulness workshop participants and the lesson plans were posted to the website. During each workshop, the website was referenced, and participants were invited to log in for the daily homework and meditation practices. Links to all the lesson plans, including all the meditations and references, were tagged in Google Analytics in order to determine actual usage statistics. On average, 39% of the workshop participants visited the website over the 6-week training series. However, on average only 35% (9) participants used the website for homework practice meditation (requiring at least two-page clicks). The meditation links were the most used. Figure 5 shows the website usage statistics. The website usage indicates that the website was used more initially for homework, but that usage dropped off dramatically after week 3, which was the Mindfulness of Thoughts workshop. The author has no explanation for this dramatic decrease but speculates that the topic Mindfulness of Thoughts was challenging, as expressed by nearly half the participants, and that could have influenced the reduction. The implication is that more training and practice may be needed for mindfulness of thoughts.

Figure 4

Website Usage Statistics



It is interesting to note that when the lesson plan structure was introduced to the participants in the mindfulness pilot, they expressed a strong interest in understanding the didactic learnings and science behind mindfulness. Likewise, throughout the workshops, this interest was expressed repeatedly by nearly half of the participants. However, the website usage and feedback results do not align with this expressed interest. The website usage links for the didactic learnings and science had only six clicks for the entire pilot period; by comparison, the meditation links had over 100 clicks. Likewise, only one or two participants who responded to the feedback surveys found the didactic learning and science to be more meaningful than the guided meditations and discussions. It is interesting to note there was an expressed interest to understanding the didactic learning and science, but the most meaningful elements in the training were self-referential and experiential learnings from the meditations and interactive discussions.

Limitations, Recommendations, and Conclusions

The most important finding from the pilot was the confirmation that mindfulness training in the workplace is beneficial. The statically significant results showed that there was a very strong positive correlation for an increase in resilience, a strong correlation in the increase in life satisfaction, and a moderate increase in acceptance following the mindfulness training. Additionally, there was a moderately strong correlation showing a decrease in stress. Statistically significant results were not found for changes in positive and negative affect and for changes in awareness levels following the training. The interesting finding from this pilot is that the dosage of mindfulness training—meeting six weeks for a one-hour session and practicing mindful meditation for only 20 minutes a few times a week—is quite low compared to that of more rigorous and standardized trainings, such MBSR. The MBSR program is 8-weeks in duration, meets 2.5-3 hours per week, and asks participants to commit to practice homework (meditation)

45 minutes daily. The results of the mindfulness pilot show that benefits can be found by offering customized and less rigorous training in smaller dosages.

Secondarily, the pilot offers some recommendations that can be drawn about the design of mindfulness training in the workplace based on the conclusions from the mindfulness pilot. The participants preferred mindfulness training workshops that were one-hour in duration and held over a series of at least six weeks. The curriculum's most meaningful elements were the guided mindfulness meditations and the interactive discussions. Likewise, although the participants expressed an interest in the didactic teaching and science behind the mindfulness curriculum, the most used and meaningful curriculum was that which was self-referential and experiential. This implies that mindfulness training that includes interactive dyad/group discussions is more meaningful than training that do not include these interactions, which has implications when considering developing virtual training. Additionally, the participants preferred meditation practice that was 3-4 days/week for 11-20 minutes in length to homework Therefore, these considerations need to be taken into account when designing the delivery of the training and the homework.

Limitations.

The most important limitation in this mindfulness pilot was the size of the study. Although there were 26 initial participants, only 20 participants completed the post- training questionnaires. Therefore, the results and interpretations of these results are limited. The results can be used to inform larger research and to further the study of offering mindfulness at work. Another limitation of this study is the research design. Due to resource constraints, the pilot did not include a randomized control group design.

Website usage statistics were helpful to understand what resonated with participants but did not allow for more in depth analysis of actual mindfulness practice amount or duration. Google Analytics does not allow the tracking of individuals, therefore individual usage and practice metrics were not available. Future studies could consider using SharePoint or similar a platform on an intranet site to allow usage tracking at the individual level. This would allow for a deeper analysis by comparing individual practice time and individual outcomes, perhaps offering some insights into the effects of mindfulness practice amount or duration and outcomes.

Another weakness in the design was the process for gathering third-party assessments of the participants. Significant benefits can be gained by measuring changes observed by third-party feedback because it does not include self-reporting bias. Plus, there are also benefits for the participants who receive the feedback from others. Third-party feedback can help participants see differences in what others notice and their own self-perceptions, giving them deeper insight into their strengths and weakness. Despite these benefits, there are challenges to gathering third-party feedback. One of the challenges is that in order to compare the results, the same questions must be asked to the participant and the third-party. Unfortunately, some of the questions on the validated self-assessment questionnaires are reflexive and cannot be easily answered by a third party as an observable behavior.

Another challenge with using third-party research is collecting data from third parties. At least three email reminders were sent to each third-party assessor for each questionnaire, and each workshop participant was asked to reach out to the persons providing them feedback at least twice. Despite the repeated requests, only 33% of participants received some third-party feedback. Of those who did receive feedback, only five received feedback from at least four persons, and thus the results are not included in this study.

The third-party feedback best practice of having at least four persons provide feedback was used in order to protect the anonymity of those providing feedback. The fact that many participants do not have at least four such persons affects the findings. Interestingly, one-quarter (25%) of the participants who completed the workshops stated that they did not have at least four persons that met the following criteria for providing criteria to provide third-party feedback:

- People you trust and who will respond accurately and truthfully
- People you interact with on a regular basis
- People you reveal your true self to

Several participants mentioned that because they were immigrants, they did not have family near enough to interact with regularly and to provide feedback. In fact, 38% (9 out of 24) of the participants who completed the workshops offered that they were not native-born. Of the five participants who were able to gather four persons to provide 360-degree feedback, only one was an immigrant. That said, one native-born participant said that they did not have four nearby persons to whom they were close because they had recently moved and did not have close enough connections. This finding highlights a challenge with gathering third party feedback, given the significant percentage of the IT workforce that is immigrant and/or transient. Second, one must consider whether this lack of deep connections influences the findings since research suggests that connection is important for well-being.

Recommendations.

Based on the results of the mindfulness pilot, it is recommended that more rigorously designed mindfulness training using RCT be developed and offered in the workplace, incorporating the design and dosage learnings to validate the conclusions made from this pilot. Finally, it is recommended that the scientific community work to develop a validated instrument to collect and analyze third-party measurements for mindfulness, stress, well-being, compassion,

and self-regulation, the primary outcomes for mindfulness training offered in the workplace. The benefits from such an instrument would significantly enhance our understanding of the impacts of mindfulness training in the workplace.

Conclusions.

The research and pilot-learnings offered in this thesis help further the understanding of the considerations for offering mindfulness training in the workplace and offers mindfulness practitioners a model for introducing and facilitating mindfulness training at their workplace. This grassroots approach further expands mindfulness in the mainstream by making mindfulness stickier and more accessible. The more mindfulness can spread into the mainstream, the more mindfulness can influence and have a positive effect on many of today's social problems.

Creative Project

This creative project portion of the thesis was built on what was gleaned from the rational paper and the mindfulness training pilot. This creative component evolved out of a personal interest to expand mindfulness more into the mainstream and is offered as a model for a mindfulness practitioner to provide mindfulness training in their workplace.

When contemplating how to increase mainstream mindfulness and realizing that many mindfulness practitioners share the desire to integrate their personal mindfulness practice with their vocations, the creative component of this thesis was developed. The rationale is that by providing mindfulness practitioners with a model that could be used to introduce and offer mindfulness training in the workplace, mindfulness could be expanded more into the mainstream. Offering mindfulness at work could be attractive to employees and employers because it can be more accessible than other non-virtual mindfulness training. Likewise,

participating in mindfulness training at work can help develop a community which can help integrate mindfulness into life.

The intended audience for this model is mindfulness practitioners who have embodied mindfulness as a competency. This means they have experienced mindfulness personally and are actively engaged in personal mindfulness practice. Despite a groundswell surrounding needed competencies for teaching mindfulness, only two studies were discovered considering the relationship between mindfulness teacher competencies and participant outcomes. Huijbers et al., (2017) found that mindfulness teacher competence was not significantly associated with key outcomes. Ruijgrok-Lupton, Crane and Dorjee (2018) conducted a small feasibility pilot and found no correlation between course participants' outcomes and their teachers' mindfulness teaching and meditation experience. Although the available research does not support a significant relationship between mindfulness teacher competencies and outcomes, leading mindfulness teacher training organizations agree that the most effective mindfulness teachers are those who have embodied mindfulness. To exemplify this point, *embodiment of mindfulness* is one of the six domains in the Mindfulness-Based Interventions: Teaching Assessment Criteria (MBI: TAC), one of the most widely used tools for assessing non-therapist mindfulness teachers' competencies. The other five competency domains in the MBI: TAC are: 1) lesson planning skills, 2) listening skills to relate to participants, 3) skills for guiding mindfulness practices, including mindful movement, 4) conveying and orienting participants to session/course themes through interactive inquiry, group dialogue, use of poems, facilitation of group exercises, and 5) holding the group environment (Crane, & Kuyken, 2019). The author of this thesis argues that embodied mindfulness is an essential competency for all of the domains of the MBI: TAC, perhaps with the exception of lesson planning. As such, this model is recommended specifically

for mindfulness practitioners who have embodied mindfulness and not for trainers, academicians, or others who do lack embodiment of mindfulness.

In addition to having embodied mindfulness, mindfulness practitioners who use this model to offer mindfulness training in the workplace must take care, *to do no harm.* As such, a mindfulness practitioner needs to take into consideration the potential risks for providing mindfulness training as discussed in the rationale paper of this thesis. Finally, this model offers precautions, such as consent and waiver forms and other suggestions to not cause harm.

Besides embodying mindfulness and the adhering to the principle of *do no harm*, mindfulness practitioners need to consider three other facets before offering mindfulness training in the workplace. The first is the intention or purpose for offering the training. From a business perspective, this would be the business case for providing mindfulness training. The business case would allow a mindfulness practitioner to introduce mindfulness, make the case to the employer, and gain support from the employer for the program. Second, what comprises the training needs to be carefully thought through. This includes building a curriculum that meets the needs of the organization and fits within the culture of the organization. Third, how the mindfulness training is presented needs to be considered. This would take into account employee/employer preferences for dosage and delivery means. These considerations are offered as the creative component of this thesis to allow a mindfulness practitioner to use for providing mindfulness training in their workplace.

Making the Business Case

The following is a description of and an example of a business case that can be used by a mindfulness practitioner. A business case is a communication tool that provides the information needed for business leaders to make a decision. In this case the decision is whether to allow

mindfulness training to be brought into the business. The business case may range in form from a discussion with a business leader or team to a more formal paper of presentation. The composition of a business case can be complex; however, for the purposes of this creative thesis, the following three key elements of the business case are considered essential for a mindfulness practitioner to make the case:

- Background – explaining what mindfulness is and is not
- Proposal – proposing what and how the mindfulness training will be offered
- Cost and benefit analysis – detailing the potential benefit, risks, and costs

Background

A business case begins by offering the background and establishing a common level of understanding, starting with defining what mindfulness is and is not. Mindfulness has been defined in many ways; for the purposes of the business case, it is helpful to define mindfulness as simply and meaningfully as possible. For example, a mindfulness practitioner could define mindfulness as being here, now, without judgment, or as the ability to stay present and aware of what is happening without judgment. Mindfulness is the opposite of mindlessness, or being on autopilot, of having the mind wander, or thinking and reacting out of habit or automatically. For clarity, it is also helpful for the mindfulness practitioner to clarify what mindfulness is not. For example, mindfulness is not a religion, relaxation training, or therapy.

Proposal

Depending on the practitioner's knowledge of the organization it may be possible to immediately proposes the mindfulness training offering, or it may be necessary to consider conducting a needs assessment to better understand what is needed and how best to offer the training. At a minimum, business case proposal should include what is to be presented and a

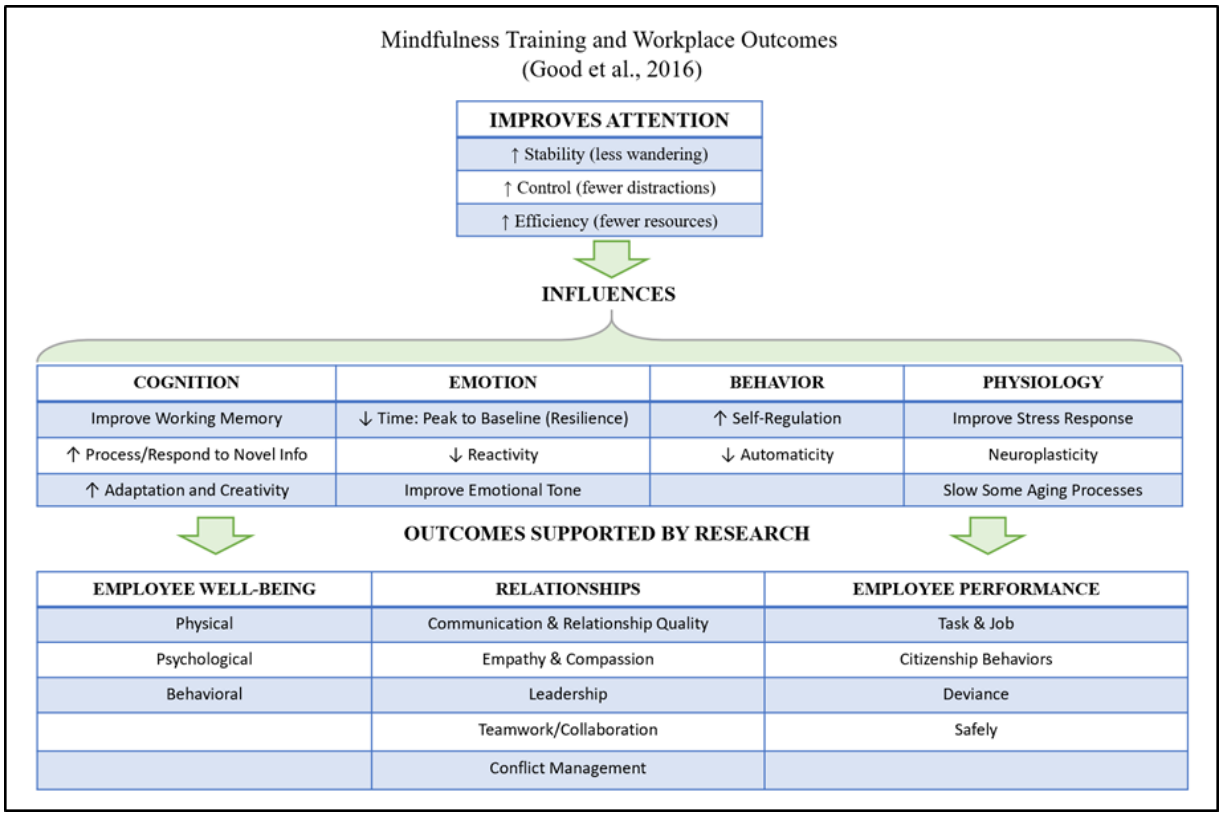
description of the training, such as the times and locations of the offering, as well as how the training will be conducted. Recommendations for this proposal can be gleaned from later sections in this creative thesis.

Cost and Benefit Analysis

In the business case, the mindfulness practitioner should share a balanced, and not over-hyped analysis of the costs and benefits of mindfulness. Ask the business leaders about the level of detail needed when providing the empirical evidence showing that benefits and risks of offering mindfulness training in the workplace. Figure 5 provides a summary of mindfulness training and workplace outcomes based on a modified framework presented by Good et al. (2016) that can be used as a model.

Figure 5

Summary of Mindfulness Training and Workplace Outcomes



To summarize, at a high level, research shows that mindfulness can increase well-being, both physically and mentally. Mindfulness has been found to decrease stress, anxiety, and depression and to increase resilience, compassion, and creativity. It also improves relationships and collaboration. It would be unethical not to share the potential risks of offering mindfulness training in the workplace. These include potential unpleasant reactions – such as agitation, discomfort, or confusion before, during, or after the training, especially for those with a trauma history. Likewise, once participants in mindfulness training gain more awareness, they may see the sources of happiness and unhappiness more clearly and may be more willing to make life-changing decisions, such as leaving a partner or changing jobs. Employees may seek more work-life balance, reducing the number of hours worked or setting boundaries with work during non-working hours. Another potential risk may be that employees strive less for extrinsic goals, such as performance goals or promotions, and focus more on intrinsic goals, such as well-being or fostering connections. Finally, there may be privacy and legal risks. The practitioner should be sure to seek legal guidance and approval for how to protect employee privacy and confidentiality.

If more details are needed about the costs and benefits for offering mindfulness training in the workplace, the practitioner could review some of the studies referenced in the rationale paper of this thesis.

Conducting a Needs Assessment

The mindfulness practitioner could offer to conduct a needs assessment. A needs assessment can be used to understand the needs or gaps in an organization and helps establish priorities for the mindfulness training. The assessment can help determine the level of

mindfulness understanding in the organization and what type of training is needed. It can also help with understanding the preferred way to offer the training (in person or virtually), the best timeframe, and the frequencies and durations for the training. A needs assessment can be conducted informally by asking questions or more formally by asking employees to complete a questionnaire. An example of a needs assessment that can be used as a model is found in Appendix B.

Developing a Change/Communications Plan

It is recommended that the mindfulness practitioner develop a change management plan when proposing to offer mindfulness training in the workplace. Change management and its encompassing communications plan are critical for the success of any program in the workplace. Change management is a process that helps employees understand and embrace change or adoption. Change management relies heavily on communications planning. This section provides an overview of how to introduce and frame a mindfulness training program for success in the workplace. It includes the critical elements of a change management/communications plan, which are sponsorship, support, and cultural fit.

One of the most important steps is to identify and develop an executive sponsor who will actively support and promote the mindfulness training across the company. Then, working with the sponsor, the practitioner can develop a plan for introducing mindfulness to the company. This usually includes a communications plan which lays out the sequencing of activities and communications for the introduction. Below is an example of the change management/communications plan used for the pilot that can be used by the practitioner as a model.

Table 3

Change Management/Communications Plan Example

Date	Description	Audience	Content	Sender	Comments
Day 1	Executive meeting	Executives	Business case	Practitioner	Seeking approval
Day 30 and 32	Email invitation	All employees	Invitation to overview sessions	Executive sponsor	Develop support
Day 35	Overview posters	All employees	Poster introducing mindfulness and promoting overview session	Practitioner	Promotion
Day 42 and 43	Overview sessions	All employees	Overview, business case, questions, and answers	Practitioner	Introducing mindfulness
Day 44	Email Q&A	All employees	Questions and answers	Practitioner	Answering questions
Day 45	Email invitation	All employees	Invitation to participate in mindfulness training	Executive Sponsor	Invitation to participate
Weekly	Email and Poster	Participants	Poster and email promoting training	Practitioner	Promotion
Quarterly	Executive Update	Executives	Update on the mindfulness training, questions, and answers	Practitioner	Develop support

Facilitating Guidelines for Practitioners

The following practitioner facilitation guidelines are designed to help the practitioner bridge the gap from personal practice to facilitating mindfulness training in the workplace. It is not meant to be an in-depth guide for how to facilitate but is a brief overview of some of the best practices for facilitating mindfulness workshops. To establish a safe space for the group, the practitioner should…

- Ensure safety and protection of confidentiality, being clear that participants should not discuss anything shared in the session outside the session.
- Prioritize self-care and safety.
- Cultivate a group culture of kindness and acceptance, practice acceptance and non-judgment.
- Let go of fixing and advice giving.
- Honor diversity.

Guiding Principles

- Guiding with embodiment, embodied mindfulness through behavior and speaking from the inner experience or awareness and guiding from the practitioner's own present moment awareness with judgment.
- Orienting toward the present moment, non-judgment, and acceptance, be open and curious.

Guidelines for Delivery

- Being authentic and genuine, open and share from within – using the practitioner's own voice, speaking in a natural voice, using the practitioner's own natural language.
- Keeping it concise – no more than 10-15 minutes on the didactic topic.
- Intonation – varying the intonation as the practitioner would when speaking normally so the practitioner does not sound monotone.

- Volume – making sure that people can hear from across the room.
- Using voice to regulate the energy in the room – if noticing low energy, increase the volume and intonation or vice versa.
- Making it interactive – using questions and soliciting responses.
- Varying the delivery, using lecture, research, videos, audios, poetry, stories, quotes, movement, discussion, and questions and answers.

Guiding Meditations

- Focusing on the intention – why are the participants here?
- Guiding a meditation giving instruction or cues and then giving space – pausing longer than the practitioner would think, when in doubt pausing longer.
- Varying the length of the pauses (between 2-8 full breath (in and out) cycles), being sure to give enough length to the pauses.
- Using inviting words, choosing words that invite the participant. Using the present participle of a verb, ending with *-ing*, for example, closing your eyes, which is softer and less demanding than "close your eyes." Examples include "I invite you to close your eyes, if that feels comfortable to you" rather than to demand, "close your eyes."
- Inclusivity – try to use the first-person plural "*our*" rather than second person "*you."* For example, try saying "now focusing our attention" rather than "focusing your attention."
- Cueing reminds participants to bring back their attention. Examples: "Where is the mind now?" "If the mind wanders, just noticing it and gently returning your attention to…"
- Normalizing – include normalizing cues. Examples: "If the mind wanders, this is normal" or "If judgments arise, this is normal."

- Trying to avoid judgmental words and adjectives that add value to the experience, for example – the practitioner should avoid using judgment words such as good or bad or replace them with more descriptive choices, such as "*delicious* breath" or "*wonderful* breath."

Facilitating Group Discussion and Sharing

- Inviting group participants to participate but allow them choice, try using the word "*would*" which gives choice, for example "who *would* like to share?" Group discussion works best when facilitating with open ended questions rather than yesterday that are yes/no questions. Use words like– "*how*" or "*what* was that like for you?"
- Sharing involves trust, try to build trust with the group, reminding the group of safety and confidentiality and guiding principles (above). Trust is built by being authentically respectful, non-judgmental, and compassionate.
- When asking participants to share, and no one shares, try role modeling the sharing. Sharing the practitioner's own experience, establishing authenticity and trust with the group. Ask again if anyone else would like to share. Wait a minute or two, try not to rush the sharing, pause, and wait. If no one is still willing to share, its ok, name it, say something like, "ok, it seems like no one would like to share, that is ok, then let's take this moment in silence together and reflect on our experience." Then give the silence space.

Responding to Difficult Questions

- Taking a breath and pause after hearing the question, take another breath, so that the practitioner does not have to immediately respond. Let the question be held in the space in the room.
- Acknowledging and thanking the person for having the courage to ask the difficult question.

- If the question has a lot of emotion/pain associated with it, acknowledge it by saying something like, “That question has a lot of pain/anger/hurt/fear/etc., associated with it.” Make some space (pause time). Honor what is said and honor the emotion being felt.
- If the question is complex with many different aspects to an answer and the practitioner does not know where to begin, the practitioner can ask the person, why they ask the question, for example, “why do you ask”?
- Allow the person asking the question to discover the answer rather than providing the answer.
- If a question is asked and the practitioner does not know the answer, say so. An example might be, “Oh, that is a great question, I don’t know the answer.”

Considerations for Developing Mindfulness Curriculum

When developing curriculum considerations, the mindfulness practitioner should strive to meets the needs of the organization and ensure that the curriculum fits within the culture of the organization. The basis for the model provided in this creative thesis is based on the results of the pilot needs assessment. Six 60-minute workshops and different versions of homework practice lasting from 20–45 minutes were provided. The training plan and curriculum started with an introduction to mindfulness, followed by training to develop basic mindfulness skills. The training began with the easier skills first (mindfulness of the body) and worked up to the more difficult skills (mindfulness of thoughts and emotions). The last two workshops focused on the application of mindfulness skills in two areas of concern (stress and communications). Each workshop was designed to be experiential and include mindful communications practice in dyads and group discussion. The structure for the model 60-minute workshops was as follows:

- Arrival Meditation and Closing Meditation

- Homework/Practice Discussion
- Didactic Talk or Science or Empirical Research for the Topic
- Practice Meditation
- Dyad/Group Discussion – Mindful Communications Practice
- Homework/Practice Discussion for Next Session

Mindfulness Workshop Learning Model, Guidelines, Intention, and Homework Practice

The following sections describe the mindfulness workshop curriculum which is offered to the mindfulness practitioner as a model to provide mindfulness training in their workplace. These sections include the underlying learning model and some foundational elements that were established upfront, namely establishing guidelines and intention. Each workshop was based on a templated lesson plan that aligned with an experiential learning model and provided a roadmap for the participants. Participants were asked to practice at home daily as homework.

Experiential Learning Model

The mindfulness workshop curriculum is based on an experiential learning model. The learning sequence begins with a didactic lesson, and then participants are led through a mindfulness practice, either a meditation or reflection, so that they can experience the lesson personally. To reinforce the lesson and experience, participants are then asked to reflect on their experience. Finally, participants are asked to share their experience and reflection with others; this can be in small groups such as dyads or in the full group.

Workshop Guidelines

The following workshop guidelines are offered to the mindfulness practitioner as a model to help facilitate the workshops in their workplace. At the beginning of the first workshop, it is

important to develop guidelines with the participants to begin establishing trust and safety for the group. The work done in these workshops can be emotionally challenging and sometimes participants can feel overwhelmed. The guidelines help to build a safe space for participants to explore and learn. The capacity to learn can be diminished when one is feeling unsafe, so it is important to create a safe environment for everyone to experience and grow. The Yerkes-Dodson learning model suggests that we learn most when challenged and not when overwhelmed. Here are some examples guidelines:

- Strict Confidentiality: The practitioner should underline the importance of strict confidentiality. What happens and is said in this room remains in this room. Participants should not discuss what is shared in the workshops outside the sessions. Do not approach someone outside this workshop about something they discussed in the sessions.
- Self-Care: The practitioner should encourage participants to exercise self-care as a priority. Remind them they are free not to participate in the exercises, do not have to share, and can pass at any time. Suggest to participants that they can use an anchor (breath, body, etc.) to calm and re-establish presence. Share available times to meet outside the session to discuss issues that may arise. Participants should feel free to get up, use the restroom, etc., as needed
- Let Go of Fixing, Advice Giving: The practitioner should remind participants to accept what arises and to not problem solve or offer advice.
- Practice Mindfulness: The practitioner should remind the participants to practice presence, awareness without judgment, practice in what we say, how we arrive/leave, and our interactions. Emphasize that there is no cross talk, only active listening. Encourage participants to speak and practice mindful communications. Ask the participants to pause, take a breath, speak from the heart, share the time and space. Remind the participants to

share the space with all participants and to not overshare or over talk starting with a long story…. when my parents met… instead, ask them to be succinct.

- Honor Diversity: The practitioner should remind the participants to honor diversity and respect differences and support inclusion.
- First Person: The practitioner should ask the participants to speak in the first person, *I*: to make *I* statements, not *you* statements and remind them not to talk about others.
- No Devices: The practitioner should ask to participants to not bring any devices – phones, recording, videoing, pc, etc., into the workshops.

Intention

Intention is an important component of mindfulness. Therefore, during the first workshop it is recommended that the practitioner discuss the power of intention and the practice of mindfulness with intention and then go on to lead a reflection on intention. Below is an example:

> *Close your eyes, imaging yourself sitting at the edge of a well, reflecting on your intention or reason for coming to these mindfulness workshops. Now imagine you pick up a pebble, think of your intention for being here, and release the pebble down into the well. As you watch the pebble slowly fall, travel through the air, and then into water, watch as the pebble finally comes to rest at the bottom of the well. Reflect on what is your intention for coming to these workshops? What really, really, really brought you here? Now open your eyes, take a minute, and write your intention in your journal.*

Intention is an integral part of the workshops and the homework practice. Each participant is asked to use the practice of daily intention and asked to set an intention each day

before getting out of bed, as suggested by Thich Nhat Hanh in *Work: How to Find Joy and Meaning in Each Hour of the Day* (2008).

Lesson Plan Layout

The following lesson plan layout is offered to the mindfulness practitioner as a model for offering lesson plans in their workplace. A consistent lesson plan template allows participants to have a road map for the workshops. The lesson plans can be laid out to follow a specific sequence for each workshop. Each session can then be tailored for the specific didactic topic and practices. The table below provides an example of a lesson plan template.

Table 4.

Lesson Plan Template Example

Timing	Topic	Purpose
0-5 min	Opening Meditation	Gather, settle, and set the intention for the session
5-10 min	Practice Discussion	Guideline reminder, discuss practice, answer questions
10-20 min	Didactic Talk	Topic and supporting science
20-30 min	Meditation or Reflection	Topical meditation and reflection
30-40 min	Practice	Mindful movement, journaling, dyad discussion
40-50 min	Group Discussion	Share experience and learning from practice/reflection
50-55	Homework Discussion	Share home practice and answer any questions
55-60 min	Closing Meditation	Reinforce the lesson, set intention for day, gratitude

Homework Practice and Optional Resources

Based on the assessment and culture of the organization, the mindfulness practitioner can offer appropriate homework practices and other resources for participants to use outside the

training sessions. Daily homework can include intention practice and mindfulness practice (including meditations and/or mindful movement). Links to online meditations and/or mindful movement that are related to the workshop topic can be provided. Based on the learnings from the mindfulness pilot, this model suggests that the practitioner offer practices ranging from 5 minutes to 30 minutes in duration. This gives participants a choice about the amount of time they practice daily. Links to optional resources, such as videos and research articles can be provided to allow participants to explore any of the topics more deeply.

Workshop Curriculum

There is a plethora of sources that can be used to develop mindfulness curriculum. The following sources were the primary sources used for developing the curriculum for the pilot conducted for this thesis: *The Mindful Workplace: Developing Resilient Individuals and Resonant Organization with MBSR* (Chaskalson, 2011) and *Search Inside Yourself* (Tan, 2012), research from the Lesley Mindfulness Studies Program, and resources offered by Jack Kornfield, Tara Brach, John Kabat-Zinn, Palouse Meditation, and others.

What follows are example of curriculums for the workshops offered in the pilot conducted for this thesis. These curriculums are offered as a model for the mindfulness practitioner. The lesson plan template established a standardized flow for the workshops. The curriculum for each workshop followed the lesson plan flow but was tailored to a specific topic, by modifying three elements: 1) didactic topic and supporting science, 2) topical meditation and/or reflection and 3) topical practice. The following workshops focus on these three elements and can be used as a model to develop additional workshops by changing these elements. Each workshop curriculum is introduced and offered as a stand-alone model or script for the mindfulness practitioner to use to facilitate the workshop.

Workshop 1: Introduction to Mindfulness

The first workshop is designed to introduce mindfulness to the participants who have may have a diverse range of understanding and experience with mindfulness.

Didactic Topic and Supporting Science.

One of the most common definitions of mindfulness is the awareness that emerges through paying attention, "on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p.4) to the unfolding of experience moment by moment. Mindfulness is the opposite of mindlessness or being on automatic pilot. Mindlessness is characterized by:

- Being in / on autopilot, i.e. during a meeting or driving to work
- Mind wandering, mind telling a story, mind worrying about the past or planning
- Reacting out of habit

What mindfulness is not:

- Religion
- Relaxation training
- Problem solving
- Never thinking about the past or future

The fundamental mind skills or mental training for mindfulness are as follows:

- Awareness (noticing)
- Acknowledge without judgment (w/ compassion)
- Re-center to presence (use an anchor like the breath or the body)

Mindfulness is about awareness. To illustrate this, the practitioner can share Joseph Campbell's (1972) model of the *circle of awareness* which is illustrated by a circle with a line drawn through the circle. Anything above the line represents conscious awareness and anything

below the line is what is outside of our consciousness. We can increase our conscious awareness (what is above the line) through mindfulness, specifically mindfulness of the body, emotions, thoughts (and spirituality). Through this awareness, we can change our relationship with our body, emotions, and thoughts. Rather than getting caught up by sensations of the body, our emotions, or thoughts, we can recognize and become aware of them and let them be as they are. Mindfulness is like meta-awareness, awareness of awareness. Mindfulness allows a kind of objectivity which allows us to change our relationship with our thoughts, allowing us not to get caught up in the thoughts, but to be with them.

Here is a summary of the current state of mindfulness research:

- There are lots of claims in the media and in popular literature about the benefits of mindfulness.
- Over 4,000 research studies have been conducted since the 1980s (American Mindfulness Research Association, 2019)
- There are challenges in quality of study design and the use of abstract definitions and measurements. The best quality research studies consist of randomized active control trials, longitudinal studies, and meta-analysis analyses of independent studies using RCTs.
- fMRIs show changes in brain structure between meditators and non-meditators:
- Mindfulness practice enhances attention. The anterior cingulate cortex is the region associated with attention in which changes in activity and/or structure in response to mindfulness meditation are most consistently reported (Hölzel et al., 2010).
    - Mindfulness practice improves emotion regulation and reduces stress. Fronto-limbic networks involved in these processes show various patterns of engagement by mindfulness meditation (Hölzel et al., 2011).

- Meditation practice has the potential to affect self-referential processing and improve present-moment awareness. The default mode networks — including the midline prefrontal cortex and posterior cingulate cortex, which support self-awareness — could be altered following mindfulness training (Farb et al., 2008).
- Mindfulness enhances self-regulation, including attention control, emotion regulation and self-awareness.

Topical Meditation and/or Reflection.

The practitioner can lead a *breath meditation*. The purpose of using an anchor, such as the breath, is to steady the body, heart and mind and invite mindfulness. The breath is the perfect anchor, it is always there, nothing has to be done, the breath breathes us. Science has also shown that deep diaphragmatic breathing (belly breathing) stimulates the vagus nerve, which can reduce stress, anxiety, anger, and inflammation by activating the *relaxation response* of your parasympathetic nervous system (Benson et al.,1974). Here are some examples of breath meditations:

- Breath Awareness - 5:30 minutes - UCLA
- Breath Meditation - 10:00 minutes - Jon Kabat Zinn
- Finding the Breath - 16:00 minutes - Ron Siegel
- Breath Meditation - 20:30 minutes - Sharon Salzberg

Topical Practice.

After a few minutes of silence is offered to allow participants to settle and reflect on the *breath meditation*. The practitioner can ask the participants to write down their experience and observations in their journals.

Workshop 2: Mindfulness of the Body

The second workshop is designed to introduce mindfulness of the body to introduce embodied presence to participants. This workshop is foundational for building on the later practices of mindfulness of thoughts and emotions, which rely on the capability of grounding oneself in the presence of the body to work more objectively with thoughts and emotions.

Didactic Topic and Supporting Science.

Research shows that there are at least three brains, the cephalic brain (head) for cognitive processing including language, cognition, consciousness, and creativity; the cardiac brain (heart) which influences affect, perception, cognitive processing and decision making; and the enteric brain (gut) which influences affect, motivation, and cognitive functioning (decision making) (Soosalu et al., 2019). Heart research has found that the focus on the mind during a body scan enhances control of the thalamus's alpha rhythm modulation in somatosensory cortex, which, in turn, sensitizes practitioners to better detect and regulate focus (Kerr et al., 2013). Some examples of the awareness of the intelligence of the body:

- Sensations of fear or stress sensations arising felt by tightness, heart, breathing
- Sensations of lightheartedness or heavy-heartedness arising from emotions and the heart
- Different sensations experienced whilst receiving a mindful hug vs. mindless hug
- Different sensations experienced whilst engaged in a mindful conversation vs. a mindless conversation

It is important to incorporate a quality of non-judgment when cultivating mindfulness of the body. It is important to become aware of the body without judgment about the body and what is being experienced. It is also important to distinguish bodily sensations from thoughts or emotions and to not get caught up in a mind's story or narrative about the sensation. For

example, if a participant feels a sensation of pain in their knee or back and starts telling a story or narrative about the pain… *this is bad…this is going to kill me…this is unfair,* evaluation or judgement, then suffering is added to the experience. Mindfulness of the body without judgement works to recognize when evaluation and judgement is being added to the experience to then focus on the experience without judgement. The reason for this is because a participant could start to feel worse, adding judgment to the story, also known as the *Second Arrow*. The quality of non-judgment means being present with the bodily sensation without adding thoughts or emotions to the bodily experience.

Topical Meditation and/or Reflection.

A body scan meditation is a good topical practice to develop mindfulness of the body. A body scan meditation is as opportunity to bring our *attention* to the present moment through the body and body sensations. The body scan can facilitate awareness of the wisdom of the body, lead to noticing the experience of the body, and allow the focus on the sensation rather than the story. This awareness allows participants to distinguish body sensations from a story and to not get caught up in the mind's narrative about the sensation.

For the body scan meditation, the practitioner can ask participants to notice any judgement or critical self-talk critical. The practitioner can remind them if they notice stories or narratives or negative self-talk to merely note it and let it go. Remind participants to approach their body with an open and accepting attitude. Ask participants to simply bring a mindful attention of curiosity and openness to the present moment, be open and curious to whatever the experience is. Here are some examples of body scan meditations:

- Body Scan - 45 minutes - Cassandra Graff
- Body Scan - 29 minutes - Jon Kabat-Zinn

- Body Scan - 11 minutes -Tara Brach
- Body Scan - 10 minutes

Topical Practice.

A mindful movement practice helps reinforce the practice of mindfulness of the body. The practitioner can lead a mindful movement practice. This can be breathing, stretching, walking, yoga, Qigong and/or Tai Chi or other movement. The purpose of mindful movement is to strengthen the connection and acceptance of the body. Mindful movement consists of slow deliberate movements that focus on the sensations and the breath and any accompanying thoughts and/or emotions. For example, mindful yoga is an opportunity to bring *attention* to the present moment through the body and body sensations. Mindful yoga integrates focused awareness of the body with physical postures and breathing. Throughout the practice, the practitioner can remind participants to bring mindful awareness to the sensations that rise and fall in the body as they move into a pose, hold a pose, and out of a pose. Asking them to become aware of the wisdom of the body, notice the experience of the body, the sensations of the body and experience, and not the story. Here are some examples of mindful yoga:

- Mindful Yoga Seated – 37 minutes - Dr. Lynn Rossy
- Mindful Yoga – 32 minutes - Ollie Frame
- Mindful Yoga Standing – 20 minutes - Dr. Lynn Rossy
- Mindful Yoga – 8 minutes - Kim Wade

Workshop 3: Mindfulness of Thoughts

The third workshop is designed to introduce mindfulness of thoughts to bring *attention* to our thoughts. This awareness allows the ability to distinguish thoughts as mental events and not as an identity of who someone is. Mindfulness of thoughts is a practice of observing the thought-

scape and thoughts, labeling them, and letting the thoughts go without getting caught up by the content of thoughts. Mindfulness of thought is practiced with a quality of non-judgment, openness, and accepting attitude. The purpose is not to stop, or control thoughts. Instead, the purpose is to become aware of thoughts and the thinking mind, to be the observer of the process of thought or the thought-scape. With this awareness it is possible to not get caught up in a mind's story or narrative, and to learn that although thoughts are real, they are not always true. With practice in mindfulness, there can be realizations that thoughts are not defining. Instead, thoughts can be distortions or beliefs and bias or a story or narrative of self. The purpose of mindfulness of thoughts is to notice any judgment or critical self-talk critical and to simply bring mindful attention to thinking with curiosity and openness to whatever the experience is.

Didactic Topic and Supporting Science.

The purpose for raising non-judgmental awareness of thoughts is to reduce suffering which can be caused by thoughts. The following can cause suffering:

- Not recognizing or being aware of automatic thoughts
- Over engaging or identifying with thoughts
- Believing thoughts to be true
- Avoiding or suppressing thoughts
- Ruminating about thoughts

Mindfulness of thoughts can increase the self-regulation of attention and awareness of thoughts by focusing attention on the present, usually using an anchor such as the breath or the body, and practicing shifting the focus of attention back to the anchor when thoughts arise. Paying attention to thoughts or mindfulness of thoughts is a meta-attention of thoughts and brings into awareness thoughts.

This awareness allows objectivity about a thought being a thought or a mental event, that is emanating from the mind. This awareness allows choice and the ability to change the relationship with the thought. This objectivity can allow one to bear witness to thought as an observer of the thought rather than getting caught up or swept away by thoughts. Mindfulness of thought also allows an objectivity about the validity of thoughts—a choice to not conflate the thought with truth—but rather to observe the thought, as just that, a thought or mental event. Mindfulness of thoughts changes one's relationship with thoughts.

Research consistently finds that mindfulness meditation has been shown to have positive effects on cognitive processes. More specifically, meditation practice can enhance attentional control, self-regulation, emotion regulation, and changes in self-perceptions (Hölzel et al., 2011; Fox et al., 2014). Although the mechanisms for how mindfulness meditation works are neither understood nor agreed upon by scientists, meditation has been shown to change the structure of the brain (Lazar et al., 2005). These changes, known as neuroplasticity, are changes to the brain based on learning or experiences.

Topical Meditation and/or Reflection.

The mindfulness practitioner can lead a *mindfulness of thoughts meditation*. Here are some examples of meditations on thoughts:

- Mindfulness of Thoughts - 7 minutes - Beth Kurland
- Meditation: Labeling Thoughts - 10 minutes
- Mindfulness of Thoughts Guided Meditation - 15 minutes
- Meditation on Awareness of Thoughts - 20 minutes - Cortland Dahl
- Meditation on Observing Thoughts - 20 minutes - Jon Kabat Zinn

Topical Practice.

After a few minutes of silence are offered to allow participants to settle and reflect on the *mindfulness of thought meditation*, the practitioner can ask participants to write down their experience and observations in their journals. The mindfulness practitioner can lead a discussion based on one or more of these starting points for inquiry:

- Awareness of thoughts – What was noticed about the thought scape, thought process and thoughts? Was it possible to label thoughts and was it helpful? What was their style of thinking? Were they thoughts about the future a lot? And if they were, were there any emotions accompanying the thoughts? Were there thoughts about the past? And if they were, was there any emotion accompanying the thoughts? What was there top ten thought play list? Did there any reruns or repeats?
- Real but not necessarily true - What did the participants observe? Were any beliefs or stories or narratives present? Were they able to bear witness to the thoughts? To be objective with the thoughts, as mental events created by their mind. Were there any thoughts that were real but not true?
- Get unhooked – Were there any thoughts that hooked the participants? Perhaps they were things like, “I’ll never be good enough” or “I am not loveable” or “taking it personally – this always happens to me.” Were they swept away by these thoughts? Were they able to bear witness to the thoughts? To be objective with the thoughts, as mental events created by their mind. Were there any thoughts that were real but not true?

Workshop 4: Mindfulness of Emotions

The third workshop is designed to introduce mindfulness of emotions. This is an opportunity to bring *attention* to emotions. This mindfulness allows participants to observe their

emotional landscape and emotions, label the emotions, and let them go without getting caught up by them. Mindfulness of emotions will help participants identify where their emotions are felt in their body. Awareness of emotion in the body helps uncover underlying body intelligence about the emotion. There is a quality of openness and acceptance to mindfulness of emotions. The purpose is not to stop, change, or control emotions, but instead to become aware of emotions and be with them. Through mindfulness of emotions, participants will experience how emotions do not define them and that many emotions are beliefs or stories or narratives of self. Mindful awareness allows participants to distinguish emotions as separate from themselves as people, and to not become defined by their emotions. For example, if someone feels angry, the emotion anger is present, but the person should not be defined as *angry*. Awareness of emotions without judgment or critical self-talk expands the window of tolerance to be with difficult emotions.

Didactic Topic and Supporting Science.

Mindfulness of emotions can increase the awareness and self-regulation of emotions by focusing attention on the present, usually using an anchor such as the breath or the body, and practicing shifting the focus of attention back to the anchor when emotions arise. Paying attention to emotions is a meta-attention of emotion and brings emotions into awareness more fully.

The purpose for raising non-judgmental awareness of emotions is to reduce suffering that can be caused by thoughts:

- Not recognizing or being aware of emotional reactions (automaticity)
- Over engaging or identifying with emotions
- Avoiding or suppressing emotions
- Ruminating in emotions

Research consistently shows that mindfulness meditation has been shown to have positive effects on emotional processes. More specifically, meditation practice can enhance emotional awareness, emotional regulation, and emotional control (Hölzel et al., 2011; Fox et al., 2014). Although the mechanisms for how mindfulness meditation works are neither understood nor agreed upon by scientists, meditation has been shown to change the structure of the brain (Lazar et al., 2005). These changes, known as neuroplasticity, are changes to the brain based on learning or experiences.

Topical Meditation and/or Reflection.

The practitioner can lead a *mindfulness of emotions meditation*. Here are some examples of meditations on emotions:

- Difficult Emotions - 7 minutes - Jack Kornfield
- Awareness of Emotions - 11 minutes
- RAIN - 12 minutes - Tara Brach
- Guided Meditation on Emotions - 19 minutes - Joseph Goldstein
- Mindfulness of Emotions - 32 minutes

Topical Practice: Mindful Communications Practice.

After a few minutes of silence are offered to allow participants to settle and reflect on the *mindfulness of emotions meditation*, the practitioner can ask the participants to write down their experience and observations in their journals.

Then sharing with the participants that they will be sharing their experience with each other in dyads first and then in the bigger group. Ask the participants to form dyads and read the following instructions for the communications practice. The inquiry is, *what was your experience with the awareness of emotions meditation?*

Instructions: One person speaks answering the inquiry for two minutes and the other listens actively. The listener then speaks for one minute, restating what they heard the speaker say or what they felt most about what the speaker said. Both reflect for one minute, reflecting on what it was like to be listened to and to have to listen. Then reversing the order, the second person becomes the speaker, answering the inquiry in two minutes and the other listens actively. The first listener then speaks for 1 minute, "what I heard you say or felt you the most", the other listening. Both reflect for 1 minute – what is was like to be listened to and to have to listen. Then a dyad can share out to the broader group what that experience was like.

The following section outlines the steps back and forth between two participants.

Step 1. 2 minutes: (Person 1: speaks, Person 2: listens actively)

Person 1: Pause, take a breath, close your eyes, and respond to the inquiry, succinctly from a place of knowing-awareness with openness and acceptance, no judgment: *what was your experience with the awareness of emotions meditation?*

Person 2: Listen with full attention, not speaking, not acknowledging, just listening. Notice if your mind wanders, and if your mind wanders, bring your attention back to the person speaking.

Step 2. 1 minute: (Person 2: speaks, Person 1: listens actively)

Person 2: Pause, take a breath, close your eyes, and respond to Person 1, succinctly from a place of knowing-awareness with openness and acceptance, no judgement, and respond: *What I heard you say was…*or *Where I felt you the most was….*

Person 1: Listen with full attention, not speaking, not acknowledging, just listening. Notice if your mind wanders, and if it does bring your attention back to the person speaking.

Step 3. 1 minute: (Reflection for both Person 1 and 2)

Take a minute to reflect on this activity. Person 1: *How did it feel to know that you had your partner's attention while they listened to you?* Person 2: *How did it feel to give your partner your attention while you listened to them?* Person 2: *If your mind wandered off, where did it go? (e.g. What were you thinking about?)?*

Reverse Roles: Person 2: speaks, Person 1: listens actively.

Step 4. 2 minutes: (Person 2: speaks, Person 1: listens actively)

Person 2: Pause, take a breath, close your eyes, and respond to the inquiry, succinctly from a place of knowing-awareness with openness and acceptance, no judgement, answer the inquiry: *what was your experience with the awareness of emotions meditation?*

Person 1: Listen with full attention, no speaking, no acknowledging, just listen. Notice if your mind wanders, and if your mind wanders, bring your attention back to the person speaking.

Step 5. 1 minute: (Person 1: speaks, Person 2: listens actively)

Person 1: Pause, take a breath, close your eyes, and respond to Person 1, succinctly from a place of knowing-awareness with openness and acceptance, no judgement.

Response: *What I heard you say was…* or *Where I felt you the most was….*

Person 2: Listen with full attention, no speaking, no acknowledging, just listen. Notice if your mind wanders, and if it does bring your attention back to the person speaking.

Step 6. 1 minute: (Reflection for both Person 1 and 2)

Take a minute to reflect on this activity.

Person 1: *How did it feel to know that you had your partner's attention while they listened to you?* Person 2: *How did it feel to give your partner your attention while you*

listened to them? Person 2: *If your mind wandered off, where did it go (e.g. What were you thinking about?)?*

Step 7. 1 minute: Turn to your partner and thank them for being your partner and listening to you.

Step 8. 5 minutes: (Group share-out): Invite a dyad briefly and succinctly (being mindful of the time), to share their experience with the broader group, focusing on the experience in the present and what they learned about mindfulness of emotions.

Additional Workshop Topics

Once the foundational skills of mindfulness have been shared, it is recommended that the mindfulness practitioner offer additional topical workshops based on the needs of the employees. Here is a list of other potential workshop topics to be considered for offering mindfulness training in the workplace:

- Compassion for Others
- Intention
- Pain (emotional and physical)
- Resilience
- Self-Compassion
- Stress

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Appendix A. Consent and Waiver Form

Mindfulness Training Pilot and Workshop Consent Form

You are invited to participate in the Mindfulness Training Pilot and Workshops. The intent of this pilot is to research the effects of mindfulness training on employee well-being and stress in the workplace. This research is being conducted by Laura Saher, the researcher, and mindfulness workshop facilitator. Your participation will entail:

1) completing a workshop sign-up survey (est. time is less 5 min),

2) completing a survey to build a 360-degree feedback team (est. time is less 5 min),

3) completing a pre- and post-workshop questionnaire (est. time is less 15 min),

4) participating in six (6) sixty (60) minute mindfulness workshops, and

5) completing daily practice or homework ranging from 20-45 minutes.

In addition,

- You are free to choose not to participate in the research and to discontinue your participation in the research at any time without facing negative consequences.
- Identifying details will be kept confidential by the researcher. Data collected will be coded with a pseudonym, the participant's identity will never be revealed by the researcher, and only the researcher will have access to the data collected.
- Any and all of your questions will be answered at any time and you are free to consult with anyone (i.e., friend, family) about your decision to participate in the research and/or to discontinue your participation.
- Participation in this research poses low risk, albeit some risk mindfulness practices such as meditation or deep contemplation can bring up unresolved issues or trigger traumatic

responses that may need further processing. For this reason, you are asked to read and sign the Mindfulness Training Pilot and Workshop Disclaimer, below.

- If any problem in connection to the research arises, you can contact the researcher, Laura Saher, Cell: XXXX, and by email at XXXX.
- The researcher may present the outcomes of this study for academic purposes (i.e., articles, teaching, conference presentations, supervision etc.)

I am 18 years of age or older. My consent to participate has been given of my own free will and that I understand all that is stated above. I copy of this consent form is attached to the invitation to complete this self-assessment.

By entering your name and date you are providing your informed consent for participation.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Mindfulness Training Pilot and Workshop Disclaimer

The mindfulness training workshops offered in this pilot are intended to help participants develop mindfulness skills and cultivate well-being. Sometimes, albeit not often, mindfulness practices such as meditation or deep contemplation can bring up unresolved issues or trigger traumatic responses that may need further processing. If you have concerns about possible adverse experiences please discuss your concerns with the facilitator, Laura Saher before participating.

These workshops are not intended as a substitute for therapy or consultation or treatment. If you are experiencing problems with mental health, grief, trauma or addiction please consult

with a qualified mental health professional before participating in this mindfulness pilot. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers confidential, professional services at no cost to employees. Access EAP through the XXX portal by typing in the keyword: EAP or calling 1-XXX or by going to the XXX website.

Neither the company, nor the facilitator, Laura Saher take responsibility for any adverse experiences or consequences that may arise for an individual during or after participation in the mindfulness training pilot. It is always the primary responsibility of the individual participating in the pilot to seek appropriate assessment, advice, support, and treatment from a qualified mental health professional. I copy of this disclaimer is attached to email invitation to complete this self-assessment.

By entering your name and date you are acknowledging that you have read the Mindfulness Training Pilot and Workshop Disclaimer and am not under the care of a mental health profession. Nor are you suffering from a recent loss or trauma or addiction. You understand and take full responsibility for any adverse experiences or consequences that may arise during or after participation in this mindfulness pilot.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B. Anonymous Needs Assessment

When conducted a needs assessment it is important to offer some guidance to respondents. What follows is an example of guidance offered for the mindfulness training pilot. Some of these questions are tough and that by answering these questions you may feel vulnerable. We also recognize that it takes courage to respond and want you to understand why your candid responses are important. We need to understand your stressors for the mindfulness facilitator to develop effective curriculum and to facilitate applicable exercises and discussions. Remember your responses are anonymous and are aggregated. Mindfulness training will not remove any of these stressors, but mindfulness can help you change your relationship with these stressors.

Part 1 (10 questions):

Instructions: please read each statement carefully and rate the degree of stress each factor causes you in your present position. Please indicate how strong the feeling is when you experience it by selecting the appropriate rating on the scale. If you have not experienced this feeling, or if the item is inappropriate for your position, select no strength/not noticeable.

No strength / not noticeable *Mild strength / barely noticeable*

Medium strength / moderately noticeable *Great strength / very noticeable*

Major strength / extremely noticeable

1. My workload is a cause of stress in my present position.
2. Organizational changes affecting me is a cause of stress in my present position.
3. My compensation and benefits are a cause of stress in my present position.
4. My interoffice relationships is a cause of stress in my present position.
5. Level of support I get from management is a cause of stress in my present position.
6. My job security is a cause of stress in my present position.

7. Time I have available to get things done is a cause of stress in my present position.

8. Trust in management is a cause of stress in my present position.

9. The effect of my work on my non-work life is a cause of stress in my present position.

10. Other causes of stress in my present position (Fill in the blank.)

Part 2 (14 questions):

Instructions: please read each statement carefully and select the appropriate rating. If you have not experienced this or if the item is inappropriate for your position, select none at all or never true.

11. I would characterize my stress level at work as?

None at all *A little* *A moderate amount* *A lot* *A great deal*

12. When I am stressed, my well-being is affected emotionally. For example, feeling insecure, vulnerable, unable to cope, depressed, or anxious.

Never true *Rarely true* *Sometimes true* *Usually true* *Almost always true*

13. When I am stressed, my well-being is affected physically. For example, cardiovascular (increased blood pressure, heart pounding or racing or change in breathing) or gastronomically (stomach pain or acid) or with fatigue (procrastinating, physical exhaustion, or weakness).

14. When I am stressed, my well-being is affected behaviorally. For example, overindulgence or consumption of food, drugs, alcohol, media, or other behaviors, such as restlessness or staying busy or overspending.

15. I do jobs or tasks automatically without being aware of what I'm doing.

16. When I do things, my mind wanders easily.

17. I find myself doing things without paying attention.

18. I am easily distracted.

19. I tend to bounce back after illness or hardship.

20. I can deal with whatever comes.

21. I can adapt to change.

22. I am easily discouraged by failure.

23. I am proud to be a member of my team.

24. I feel motivated by my role/workplace.

25. I see a clear link between my work and the company's goals and objectives.

Part 3 (3 questions):

26. If I could change just one thing about working with [insert company name], it would be? (fill in blank)

27. What is your level of experience with mindfulness?

None *Less than 1 year* *1-5 years* *5 or more years*

28. What is your current level of interest for participating in a weekly workshop as part of the mindfulness pilot? You are not committing to anything currently; we are just trying to gauge the potential level of interest for the pilot.

None *A little* *Some* *A Lot*

Appendix C. Participant Signup Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in participating in the mindfulness pilot and workshops. We recognize that your time is your greatest resource and that your ability to participate in these workshops will depend on your time and availability. By answering these questions, you help us figure out how to best optimize the timing of these workshops. Research shows that more significant mindfulness outcomes are found when participating in mindfulness training that follows certain protocols. The table below highlights these protocols (best practices) and outcomes relative to timing to show the relationship between time investment and results. The best outcomes are found when participating in 6-8 weekly experiential learning 90-minute workshops, when complimented with daily practice (homework) which takes anywhere from 20-45 minutes. When considering the amount of time, you can commit, please consider this table and your intention for participating in the mindfulness workshops when answering the following questions.

Table 5

Workshop Commitment and Duration

Best Practice Protocols	Greater results	Moderate results	Lower results
Number of workshops	6-8	4-6	1-4
Frequency of workshops	Weekly	Weekly	1-2 per month
Duration of workshops	~90 minutes	~60 minutes	~30 minutes
Duration of daily practice (homework)	20-45 minutes	15-20 minutes	<10 minutes

1. After considering the best practices and the time commitment to deliver the best results (above table), how much time could you commit weekly to participate in the mindfulness workshops?

30-minute workshop/week *60-minute workshop/week* *90-minute workshop/week*

2. After considering the best practices and the time commitment to deliver the best results (above table), how much time could you commit to daily practice (homework), outside the workshops?

0 minutes daily *20 minutes daily* *45 minutes daily*

3. The mindfulness workshops will begin the first week in October. How many workshops could you potentially participate in given the following schedule?

- *1 - 4 workshops; offered during October and November*
- *6 workshops; 1 workshop once a week for the month of October, and 2 workshops once a week the first 2 weeks in November*
- *8 workshops; 1 workshop once a week for the month of October, 3 workshops once a week in November (there will be no workshop offered during the week of Thanksgiving), and 1 workshop the first week in December*

4. Please rank order the days that would be the best days to participate in the mindfulness workshops. The facilitator cannot offer workshops on Wednesday.

Monday *Tuesday* *Thursday* *Friday*

5. When considering the best day for your participation from question 4, please slide the slider to best **start** time on that day, you think would best for you to participate in the mindfulness workshops.

7 am *12 pm* *7 pm*

6. The workshops are highly interactive, and the participants will be asked to share their reflections and experiences with others in the workshop. If the workshop participants include both managers and nonmanagers, how would that affect your ability to opening share?

- *None – I have no concerns and could openly share*

- *Some – I have some concerns, but if an adequately safe environment and ground rules were established, I could openly share*
- *Moderate – I have a lot of concern, even if an adequately safe environment and ground rules were established, I would hesitate about openly sharing*
- *High – I do not believe an adequately safe environment and ground rules could be established. I could not openly share, unless I were in a manager-only workshop or a non-manager-only workshop*

7. Below are some common topics for mindfulness workshops, please rank order the topics you would be most beneficial for you, one is the highest.

- *Increasing focus and attention*
- *Reducing stress*
- *Increasing resilience*
- *Improving interpersonal communications (mindful communications)*
- *Decreasing reactivity, working with triggers, and letting go*
- *Decreasing self-criticism, increasing self-compassion*

8. Besides the common topics for mindfulness workshops ranked in question 7, what other topic(s) you would be most beneficial for you? (Fill in the blank)

9. Please provide your name and contact information, the facilitator, will reach out to you and your manager to develop the optimal timing to maximize participation.

- *Name*
- *Email Address*
- *Phone Number*

10. Please provide your manager's contact information. Please let your manager know that you are interested in participating in the pilot. Also, please let your manager know that the facilitator, will contact them to discuss optimal timing for your participation.

- *Name*
- *State/Province*
- *Country*
- *Email Address*
- *Phone Number*

11. What is your level of mindfulness experience?

None *Less than 1 year* *1-5 years* *5+ years*

Appendix D. Participant Pre- and Post- Mindfulness Workshop Questionnaire

Participant Pre- Mindfulness Workshop Questionnaire

Please complete the following 67 question survey **no later than *date*** before the workshops begin on 8 October. This is important for you to understand your starting point before taking the mindfulness workshops and any changes that occur after the workshops. You will be asked to complete another survey after completing the mindfulness workshops. You will receive the results so that you can see the changes.

This survey IS confidential. No individual responses will be shared. Only aggregate responses, combining all participants' responses will be used.

This survey is NOT anonymous because in order to understand the change pre-workshop and post-workshop, your results have to be identified to you in order to make the comparison.

Consent/Disclaimer: at the end of this questionnaire you will be asked to electronically sign a consent form and disclaimer, allowing for your participation in the mindfulness workshops.

Instructions: please read the next 10 statements carefully and rate each statement for how often in the last month you....

Never *Almost never* *Sometimes* *Fairly often* *Very often*

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?
4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?
6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?
7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?
8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?
9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?
10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Instructions: Below are statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Slightly disagree* *Neither agree nor disagree*
Slightly agree *Agree* *Strongly agree*

11. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
12. The conditions of my life are excellent.
13. I am satisfied with my life.
14. So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.
15. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.
16. I am able to adapt to change.
17. I can deal with whatever comes.
18. I see the humorous side of things.
19. Coping with stress can strengthen me.
20. I tend to bounce back after illness or hardship.

21. I can achieve goals despite obstacles.

22. Under pressure, I focus and think clearly.

23. I am not easily discouraged by failure.

24. I think of myself as strong person.

25. I can handle unpleasant feelings.

Instructions: below are words that describes different feelings and emotions. Read each word carefully and rate the extent you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment OR indicate the extent you have felt this way over the past week.

26. Interested

27. Distressed

28. Excited

29. Upset

30. Strong

31. Guilty

32. Scared

33. Hostile

34. Enthusiastic

35. Proud

36. Irritable

37. Alert

38. Ashamed

39. Inspired

40. Nervous

41. Determined

42. Attentive

43. Jittery

44. Active

45. Afraid

Instructions: please rate how often you experienced each of the following statements within the past week.

Never *Rarely true* *Sometimes true* *Often true* *Always true*

46. I am aware of what thoughts are passing through my mind.

47. I try to distract myself when I feel unpleasant emotions.

48. There are aspects of myself I don't want to think about.

49. When I shower, I am aware of how the water is running over my body.

50. I try to stay busy to keep thoughts or feelings from coming to mind.

51. When I am startled, I notice what is going on inside my body.

52. I wish I could control my emotions more easily.

53. When I walk outside, I am aware of smells or how the air feels against my face.

54. I'm good at thinking of words to express my perceptions, such as how things taste, smell, or sound.

55. I tell myself that I shouldn't have certain thoughts.

56. When someone asks how I am feeling, I can identify my emotions easily.

57. There are things I try not to think about.

58. I am aware of thoughts I'm having when my mood changes.

59. I tell myself that I shouldn't feel sad.

60. I notice changes inside my body, like my heart beating faster or my muscles getting tense.
61. If there is something I don't want to think about, I'll try many things to get it out of my mind.
62. Whenever my emotions change, I am conscious of them immediately.
63. I try to put my problems out of mind.
64. When talking with other people, I am aware of the emotions I am experiencing.
65. When I have a bad memory, I try to distract myself to make it go away.

<Insert Informed Consent Form>

66. By entering your full name are providing your informed consent for participation.

<Insert Workshop Disclaimer>

67. By entering your full name, you are acknowledging that you have read the Mindfulness Pilot and Workshop Disclaimer and that you not under the care of a mental health profession. Nor are you suffering from a recent loss or trauma or addiction. You understand and take full responsibility for any adverse experiences or consequences that may arise during or after participation in this mindfulness pilot.

Participant Post- Mindfulness Workshop Questionnaire

Note: The post- mindfulness workshop questionnaire is almost identical to the pre-questionnaire. The post-questionnaire did not include questions 66 and 67 but had the following additional three questions upfront.

Thank you for participating in the mindfulness workshops. I hope they served you!! Please complete the following 70 question survey **no later than <*insert date*>.** This is important for you to understand any changes that occurred after completing the mindfulness workshops by comparing your responses from this ending point to your responses from your earlier self-assessment, your starting point before the workshops. Additionally, if you have at least 4-persons

providing you 360-Degree Feedback, you will receive the results from their pre (before workshop) and post (after workshop) responses from your feedback team. Once you and your 360-degree Feedback Team (if you have one) completed the surveys, I will analyze your changes and send you the results. I hope to complete the analysis and results completed by <*insert date*>.

This survey IS confidential. No individual responses will be shared. Only aggregate responses, combining all participants' responses will be used.

This survey is NOT anonymous because in order to understand the change pre-workshop and post-workshop, your results have to be identified to you in order to make the comparison.

1. What is your name?
2. What was your intention for participating in these mindfulness workshops? Why did you really, really, really participate? (fill in the blank)
3. How would you rate the effect of the mindfulness workshops on your intention?
    - *Strong positive effect on my intention*
    - *Somewhat of a positive effect on my intention*
    - *Slightly positive effect on my intention*
    - *No effect on my intention*
    - *Slightly negative effect on my intention*
    - *Somewhat of a negative effect on my intention*
    - *Strong negative effect on my intention*

Appendix E. Third Party Pre- and Post- Mindfulness Workshop Questionnaire

Third Party Pre- Workshop Questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to provide feedback for the participant attending the upcoming mindfulness workshops. Please complete the following 67 question survey **no later than <*insert date*>,** the average time to complete the survey is **10 minutes.** The workshops begin on *date*, so this must be completed no later than *date*. Your feedback is very important to the person for whom you are providing feedback. Your feedback will help them understand any changes by participating in the mindfulness workshops. You will be asked to provide feedback again in November once the workshops are complete.

This survey is confidential. No individual responses will be shared. Only aggregate results, combining the responses from the 4-6 members of the 360-Degree Feedback Team, will be shared. The person who is being offered the feedback will not know who provided what feedback and will only see the aggregate of feedback results.

1. Please provide the name of the person for whom you are providing feedback.

2. What category below best describes your relationship with the person for whom you are providing feedback?

- *Spouse or partner*
- *Other family*
- *Friend or colleague outside of work*
- *Work associate or colleague*

Instructions: please read each statement carefully and rate each statement filling in blank with the name of the person for whom you are providing feedback. How often in the last month did _____ do this?

Never *Almost never* *Sometimes* *Fairly often* *Very often*

3. In the last month, how often was _____ upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?

4. In the last month, how often was _____ unable to control the important things in their life?

5. In the last month, how often was _____ nervous and "stressed"?

6. In the last month, how often was _____ confident about their ability to handle their personal problems?

7. In the last month, how often did _____ feel things were going their way?

8. In the last month, how often could _____ not cope with all the things that they had to do?

9. In the last month, how often was _____ able to control irritations in their life?

10. In the last month, how often was _____ on top of things?

11. In the last month, how often was _____ angered because of things that were outside of their control?

12. In the last month, how often did _____ feel difficulties were piling up so high that they could not overcome them?

Instructions: please read the next statements carefully and rate each statement filling in the blank with the name of the person for whom you are providing feedback. Using the scale below, indicate your degree of agreement with each item by selecting the rating for the person for whom you are providing feedback. Please be open and honest in your responding.

Strongly disagree *Disagree* *Slightly disagree* *Neither disagree nor agree* *Slightly agree* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*

13. In most ways _____'s life is close to their ideal.

14. _____ considers the conditions of their life to be excellent.

15. _____ is satisfied with their life.

16. So far, _____ has gotten the important things they want in life.

17. If _____ could live their life over, they would change almost nothing.

18. _____ is able to adapt to change.

19. _____ can deal with whatever comes.

20. _____ can see the humorous side of things.

21. _____ believes that coping with stress can strengthen them.

22. _____ tends to bounce back after illness or hardship.

23. _____ can achieve goals despite obstacles.

24. Under pressure, _____ focuses and thinks clearly.

25. _____ is not easily discouraged by failure.

26. _____ thinks of him/herself as strong person.

27. _____ can handle unpleasant feelings.

Instructions: below are words that describes different feelings and emotions. Read each word carefully, filling in the blank with the name of the person for whom you are providing feedback. Rate the extent you feel that the word describes the person most recently.

Not at all or very slightly *A little* *Moderately* *Quite a bit* *Extremely*

28. _____ is interested.

29. _____ is distressed.

30. _____ is excited.

31. _____ is upset.

32. _____ is strong.

33. _____ is guilty.

34. _____ is scared.

35. _____ is hostile.

36. _____ is enthusiastic.

37. _____ is proud.

38. _____ is irritable.

39. _____ is alert.

40. _____ is ashamed.

41. _____ is inspired.

42. _____ is nervous.

43. _____ is determined.

44. _____ is attentive.

45. _____ is jittery.

46. _____ is active.

47. _____ is afraid.

Instructions: please rate how often the person for whom you are providing feedback, filling their name in the blank, experienced each of the following statements within the past week.

Never *Rarely true* *Sometimes true* *Often true* *Always true*

48. _____ is aware of what thoughts are passing through their mind.

49. _____ tries to distract him/herself when they feel unpleasant emotions.

50. When talking with other people, _____ is aware of their facial and body expressions.

51. There are aspects of him/herself that __ _____ doesn't want to think about.

52. When in the rain_____ is aware of the rain on their body.

53. _____ tries to stay busy to keep thoughts or feelings from coming to mind.

54. When _____ is startled, they notice what is going on inside their body.

55. _____ wishes they could control their emotions more easily.

56. When _____ walks outside, they are aware of smells or how the air feels against their face.

57. _____ believes that they shouldn't have certain thoughts.

58. When someone asks _____ how they are feeling, they can identify their emotions easily.

59. There are things _____ tries not to think about.

60. _____ is aware of thoughts that they are having when their mood changes.

61. _____ tells him/herself that I they shouldn't feel sad.

62. _____ notices change inside their body, like their heart beating faster or their muscles

63. If there is something _____ doesn't want to think about, they will try many things to get it out of their mind.

64. Whenever _____'s emotions change, they are conscious of them immediately.

65. _____ tries to put their problems out of their mind.

66. When talking with other people, _____ is aware of the emotions they are experiencing.

67. When _____ has a bad memory, they try to distract themselves to make the memory go away.

< Insert Informed Consent Form>

I am 18 years of age or older. My consent to participate has been given of my own free will and that I understand all that is stated above. I copy of this consent form is attached to the invitation to complete this 360-Degree Feedback survey.

Fill in your first and last Name

Third Party Post- Mindfulness Workshop Questionnaire

Note: The post- mindfulness workshop questionnaire is almost identical to the pre-questionnaire. The post-questionnaire did not include the consent form but had one additional question upfront.

Thank you for agreeing to provide feedback for the participant who attended the mindfulness workshops. Please complete the following 66 question survey **no later than <*insert date*>,** the average time to complete the survey is **10 minutes.** Your feedback is very important to the person for whom you are providing feedback. Your feedback will help them understand any changes that may have occurred following their participation in the mindfulness workshops. **This survey is confidential**. No individual responses will be shared. Only aggregate results, combining the responses from the 4-6 members of the 360-Degree Feedback Team, will be shared. The person who is being offered the feedback will not know who provided what feedback and will only see the aggregate of feedback results.

1. Please provide the name of the person for whom you are providing feedback (not your name). (fill in the blank)